

14
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An Inspiring Story of Megh Kumar



INSPIRING STORY OF MEGHKUMAR

Shrenik, the emperor of Magadh had intimate relations with the religious group of Bhagwan Mahavir. He himself and his queen Chelana were followers of Bhagwan Mahavir. Even their eldest son emperor Ajatshatru Kunik also was a follower of Bhagwan Mahavir in his time. The description of accepting monkhood and practicing penance and meditation by many queens of king Shrenik, minister in chief Abhaykumar and Meghkumar, Nandishen etc. is available in Jain Agams (scriptures).

The description of Meghkumar's event is available in detail in the first chapter of Gyatasutra. In this event the description of the disturbances arising within Meghkumar on the first night of monkhood, impatience arised out of the imagination of the foreseen troubles of the restrained life and Bhagwan Mahavir's narration of the previous birth's events to awaken Meghkumar is given in detail. The compassion and tolerance shown for a small creature and as a result the birth from animal life to human life touches the heart of reader and listener sensitively.

Meghkumar is awakened after hearing his autobiography from Bhagwan Mahavir. His determinations which were slackened becomes stronger and he stabilises himself in restraint with faith, leaving impatience, restlessness and conflict. He gives himself at the feet of Bhagwan with firm determination for the life time.

For years to come this autobiography will give the message of compassion, tolerance and patience. This message of Bhagwan Mahavir will be helpful to awaken those souls who are slumbering in the dark, and will give the message of being compassionate even when in pain. And this event also tells about great fruits of "reverence for life".

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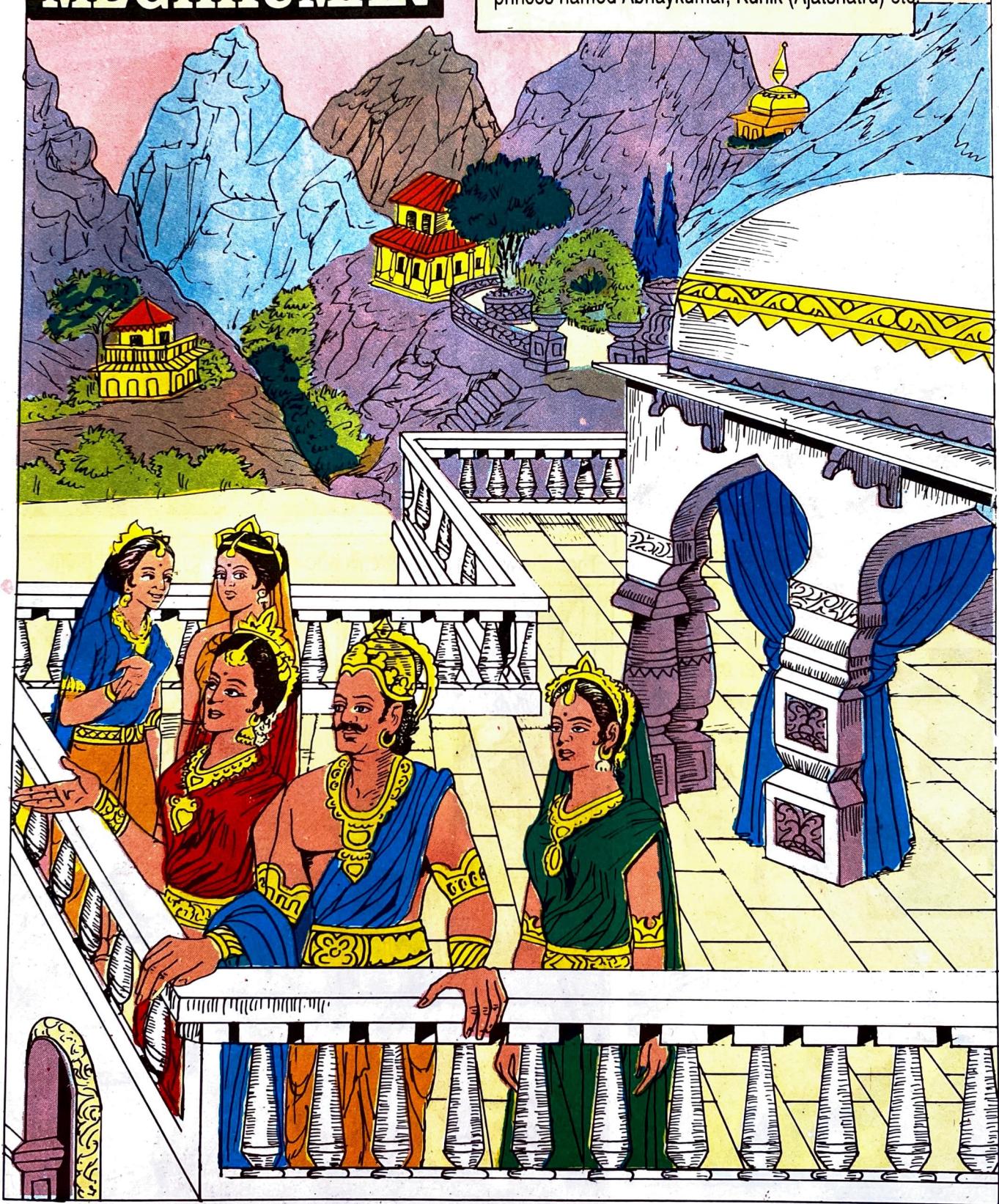
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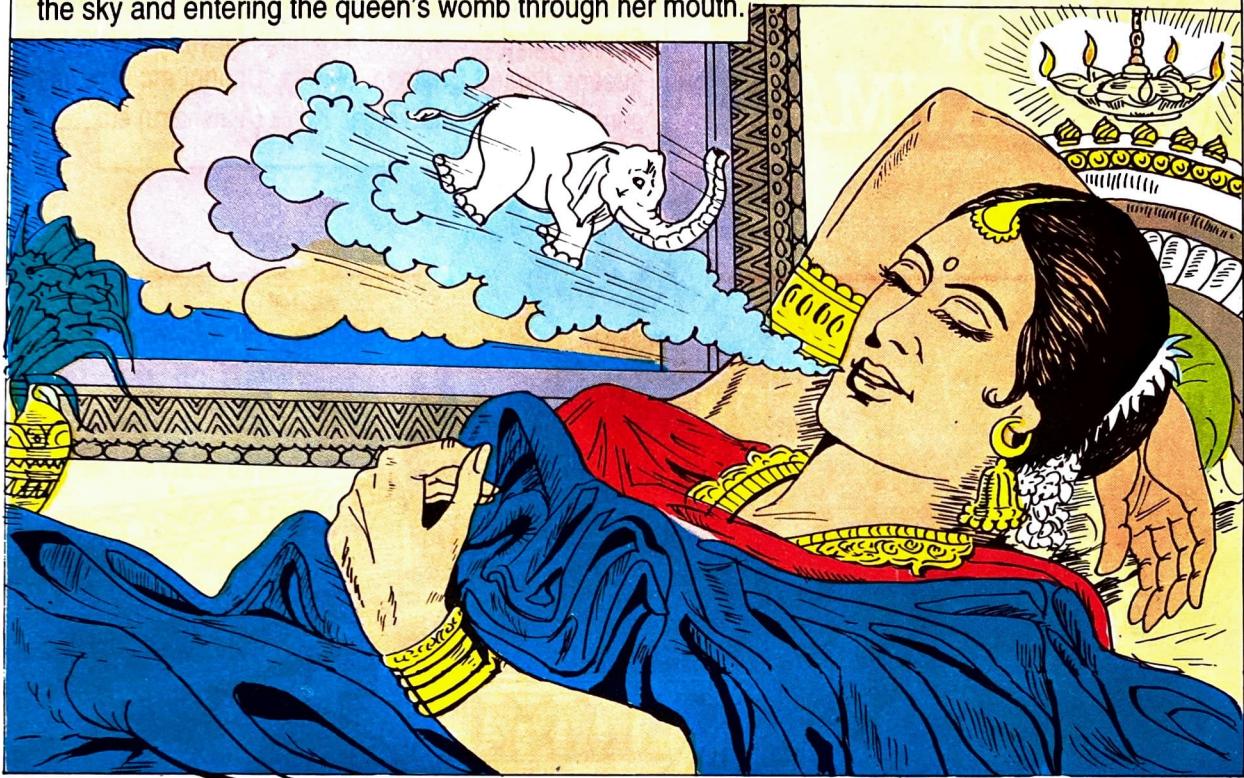
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INSPIRING STORY OF MEGHKUMAR

Rajgruhi, the capital of Magadh was located at the feet of five mountains named Vipulachal etc. King Bimbisar Shrenik ruled over it. He had a large family including many queens named Chelana, Nanda, Dharini etc. and many princes named Abhaykumar, Kunik (Ajatshatru) etc.



Once queen Dharini saw a dream that a huge white elephant with trunk up was coming down from the sky and entering the queen's womb through her mouth.



The queen woke up seeing the dream. She thought for a while on this strange dream.

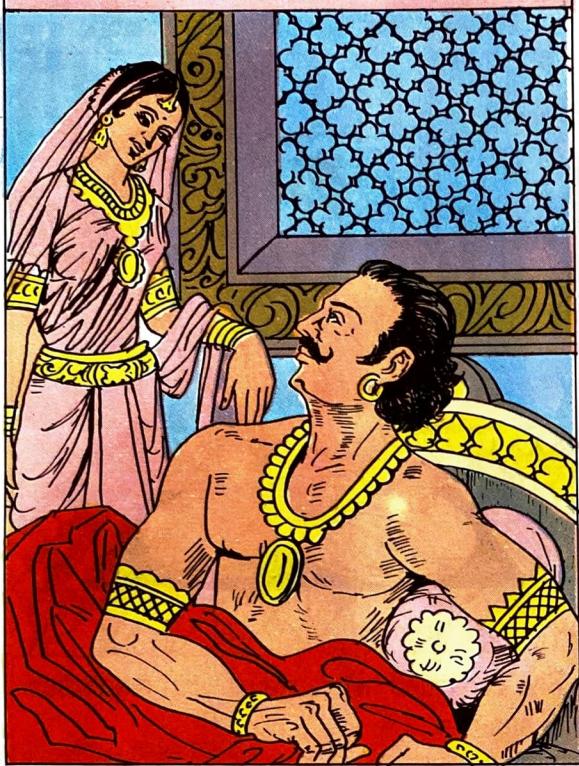


Then she went to King Shrenik who was sleeping in the next room.



INSPIRING STORY OF MEGHKUMAR

Hearing the noise of the queen's feet, Shernik woke up.



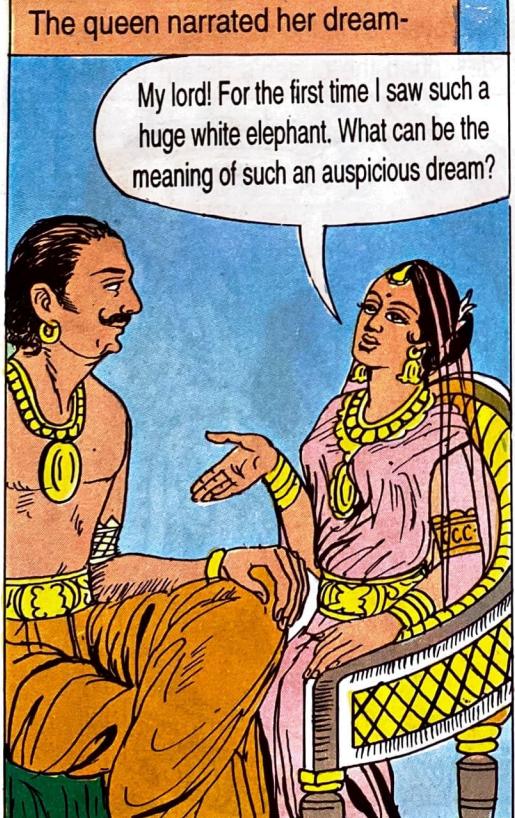
The king told the queen to sit and asked-

Goddess! What's the matter? Why did you come so late in the night?



The queen narrated her dream-

My lord! For the first time I saw such a huge white elephant. What can be the meaning of such an auspicious dream?



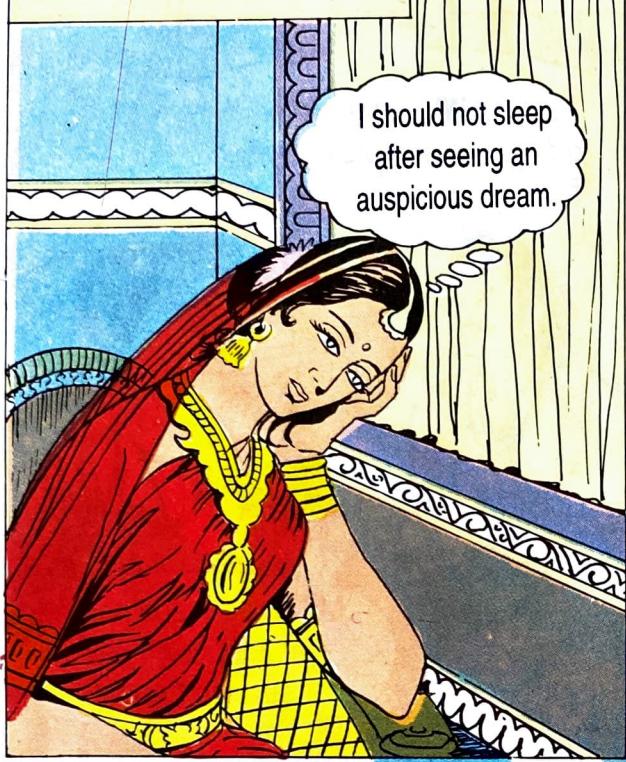
Shrenik said-

Goddess! Your dream is the best! You'll soon be mother of a great son.

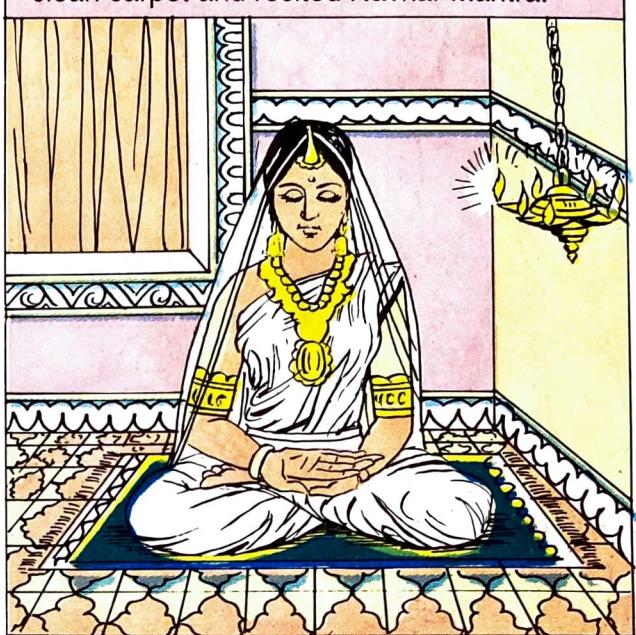


On hearing the king queen Dharini's face showed happiness and pink glow of shyness.

The queen returned to her room after talking for sometime. She thought-

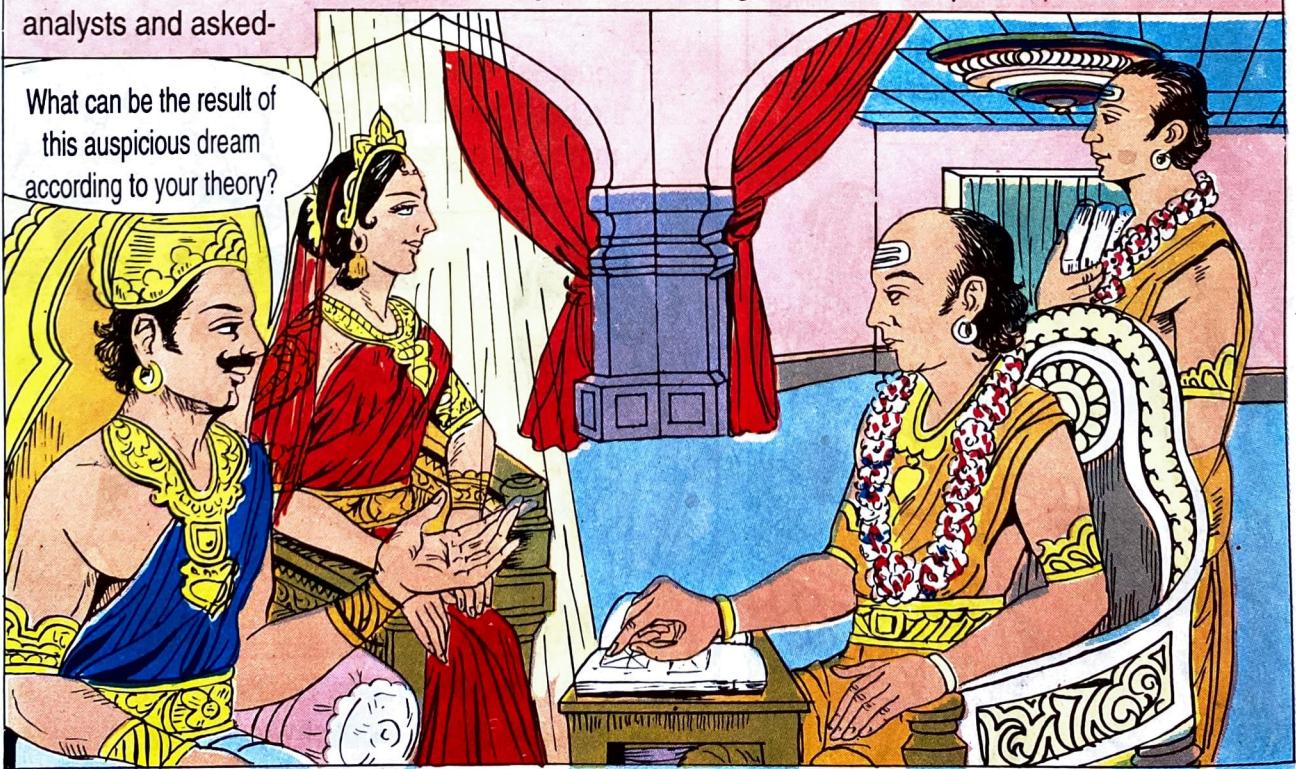


Deciding in this way she, took a seat on the clean carpet and recited Navkar Mantra.



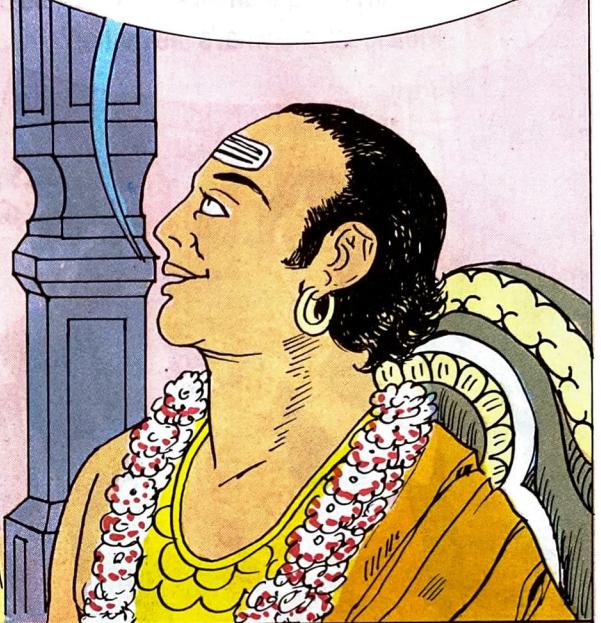
She continued her recitation and meditation till sun-rise.

King Shrenik invited the best, intelligent dream analysts to the royal hall in the morning. The queen sat behind a thin white curtain in the royal hall. The king described the queen's dream to dream analysts and asked-



The main dream analysts read his literature and said-

My lord! To see white elephant means it is an auspicious dream. This indicates that queen Dharini will soon become a mother of a great son who will increase your name, fame and wealth.



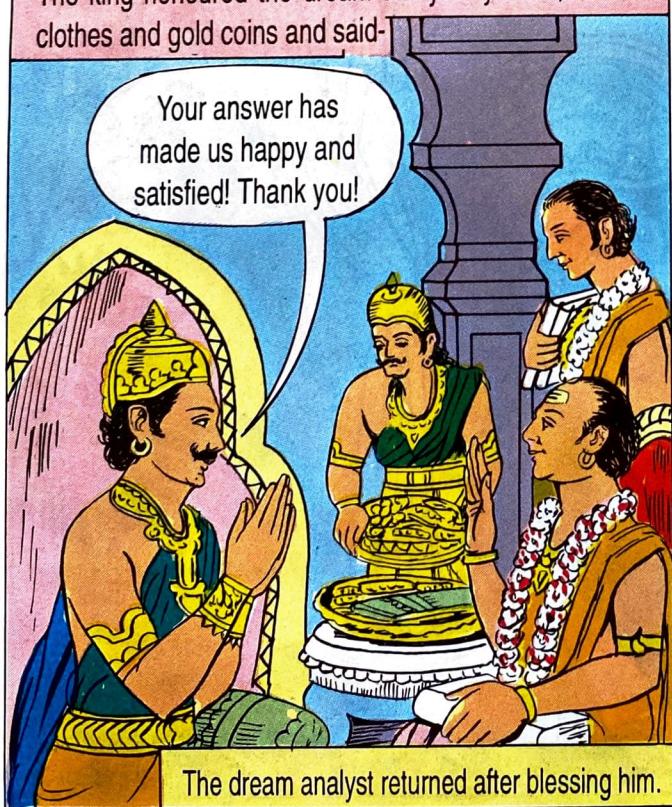
Queen Dharini and Shrenik were very happy to hear the analysis.

The king honoured the dream analyst by fruits, flowers, clothes and gold coins and said-

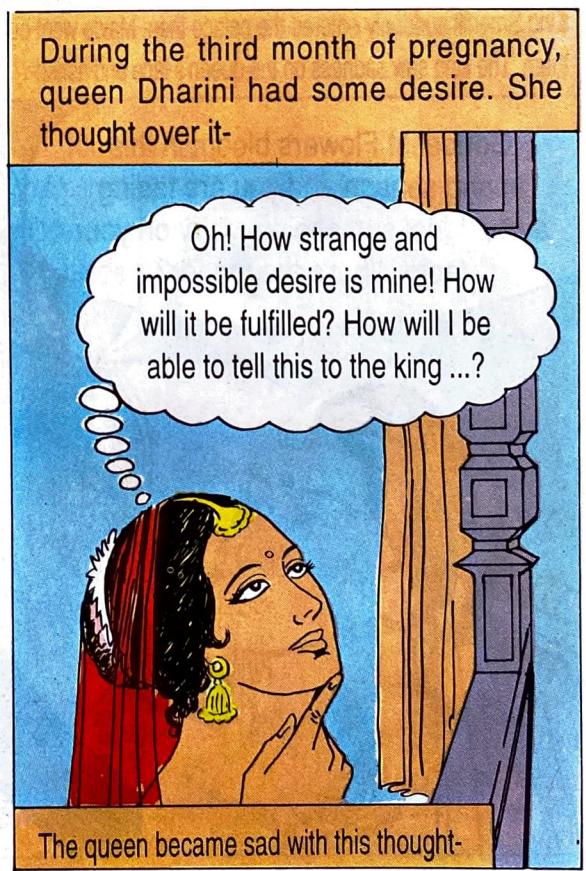
Your answer has made us happy and satisfied! Thank you!

During the third month of pregnancy, queen Dharini had some desire. She thought over it-

Oh! How strange and impossible desire is mine! How will it be fulfilled? How will I be able to tell this to the king ...?



The dream analyst returned after blessing him.



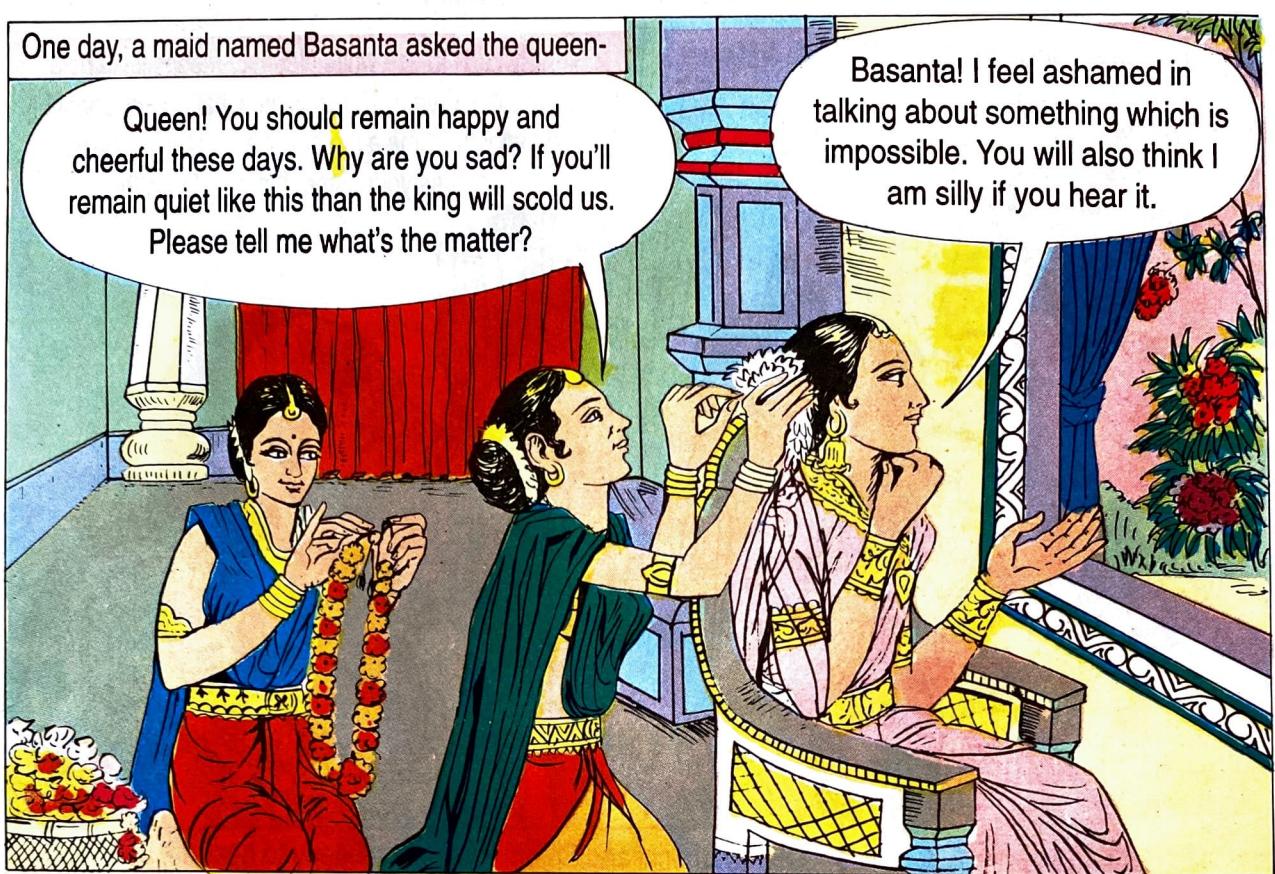
The queen became sad with this thought-

One day, a maid named Basanta asked the queen-

Queen! You should remain happy and cheerful these days. Why are you sad? If you'll remain quiet like this than the king will scold us.

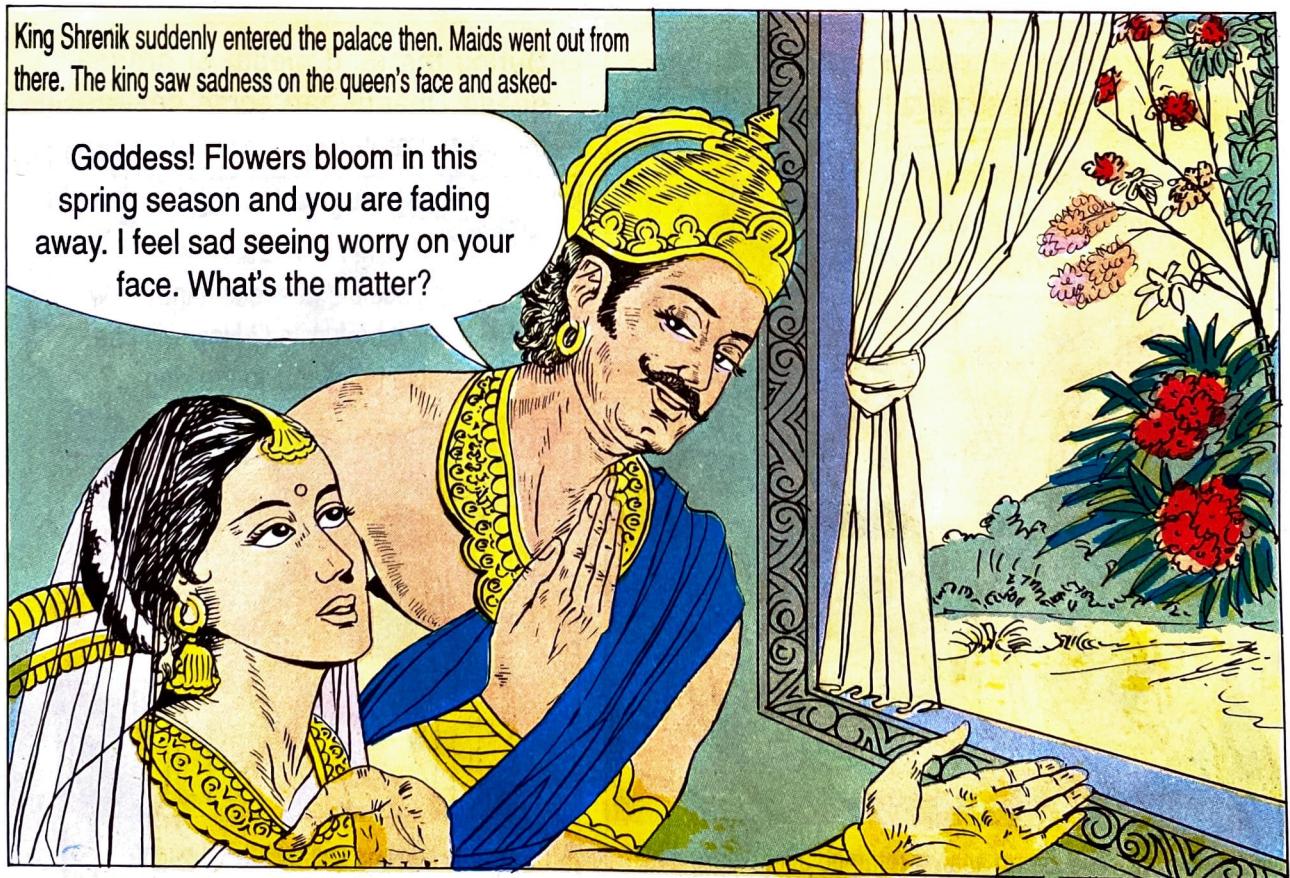
Please tell me what's the matter?

Basanta! I feel ashamed in talking about something which is impossible. You will also think I am silly if you hear it.

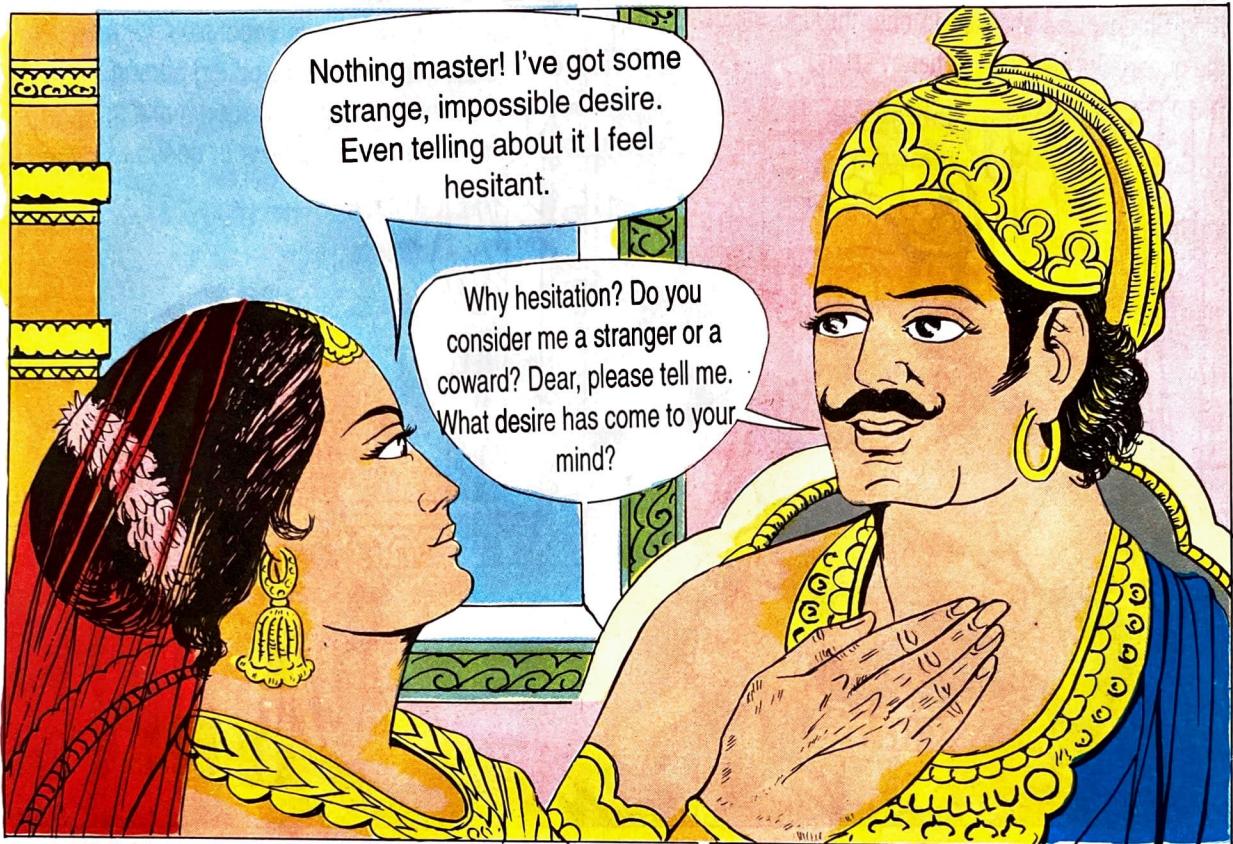


King Shrenik suddenly entered the palace then. Maids went out from there. The king saw sadness on the queen's face and asked-

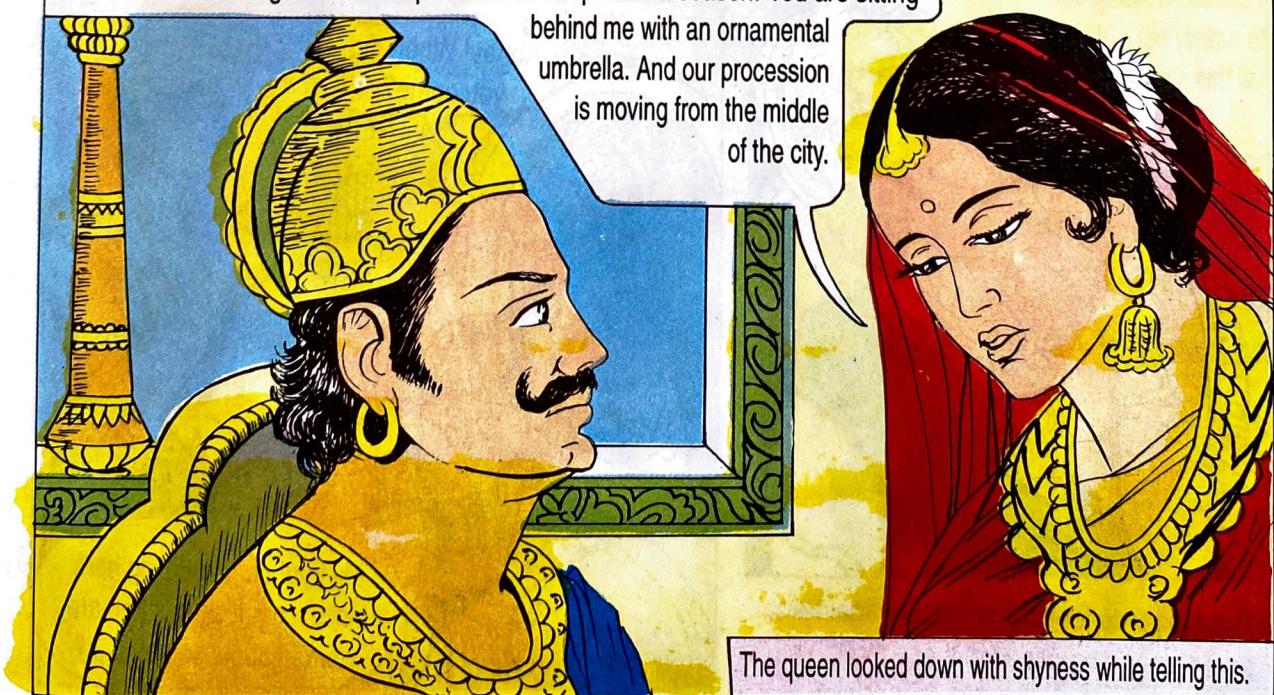
Goddess! Flowers bloom in this spring season and you are fading away. I feel sad seeing worry on your face. What's the matter?



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My lord! My desire is that there are clouds in the sky with thunder storms. Rain is sprinkling! There is greenery everywhere on the earth. Peacocks are dancing, and I am sitting on white elephant in such a pleasant season. You are sitting behind me with an ornamental umbrella. And our procession is moving from the middle of the city.

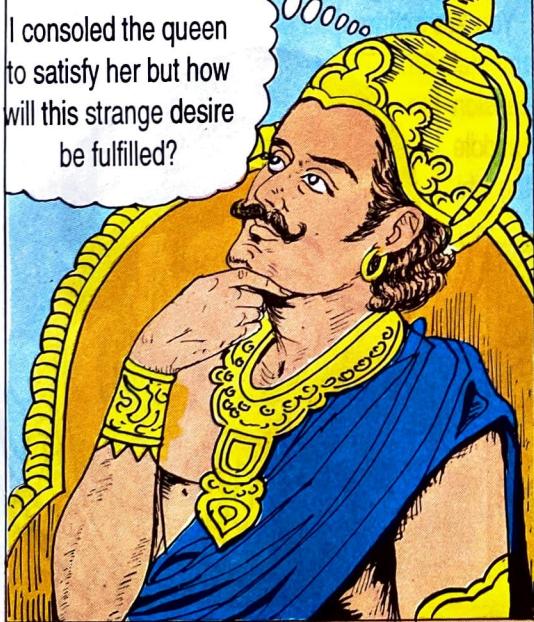


King Shrenik was shocked to hear the unusual desire of the queen. But he consoled her by saying-



Goddess! Nothing is impossible for an intelligent and hard working person. Please don't worry. I'll soon make an arrangement to fulfill your desire...!

Shrenik returned back to the royal hall after consoling the queen.



The king was looking at the sky again and again being engrossed in these thoughts.

Then the minister in chief Abhaykumar, came to bow down his father. But the king didn't attend him. After sometime when the king saw Abhaykumar, he asked with hesitation-



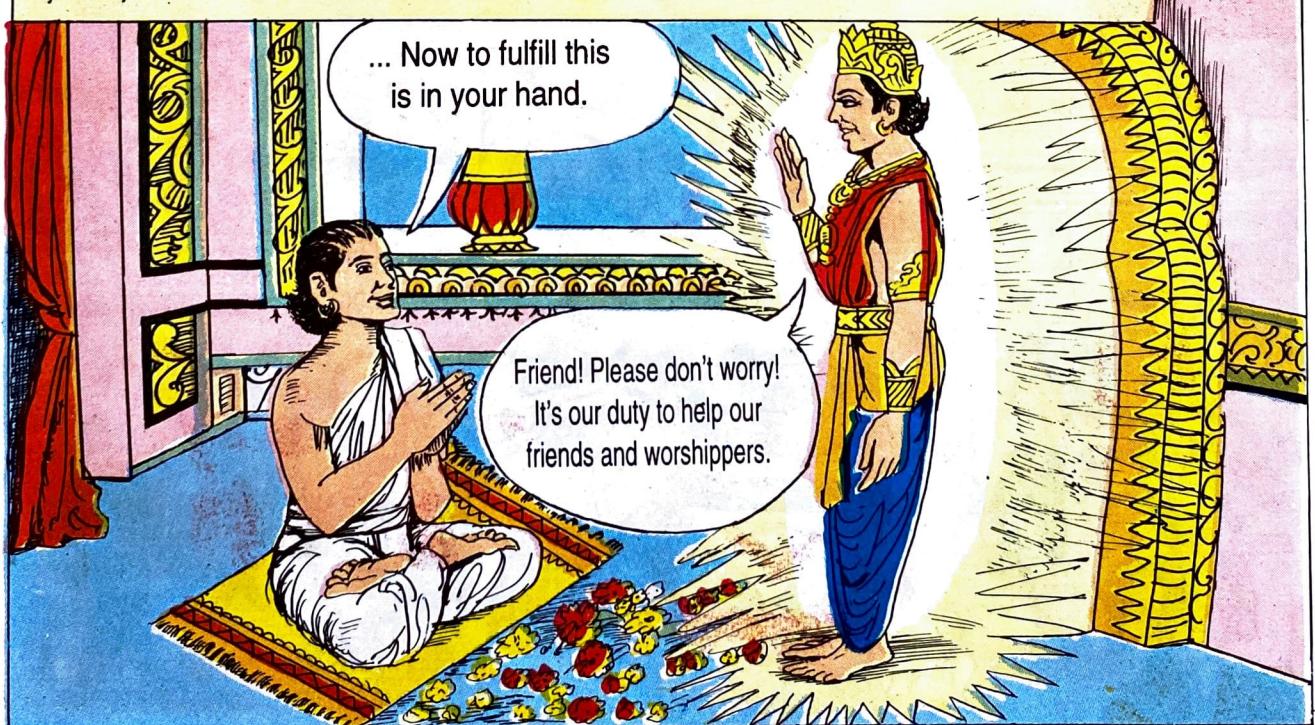
Shrenik got up and went to the secret meeting room with Abhay. He narrated Abhaykumar about queen Dharini's desire and said-

Abhay! I've faith on your intellect and braveness and that's why I've consoled the queen for fulfilling her desire. Now plan for it to come true.

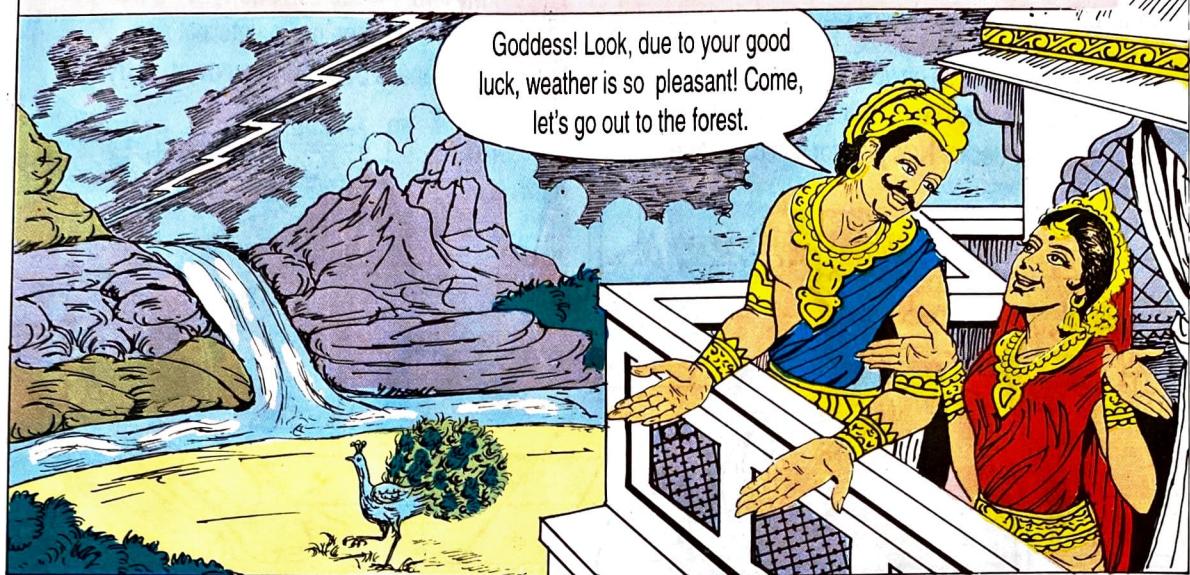
My lord! Please don't worry! This work will be done not by intellect and braveness but by divine power. I'll try.



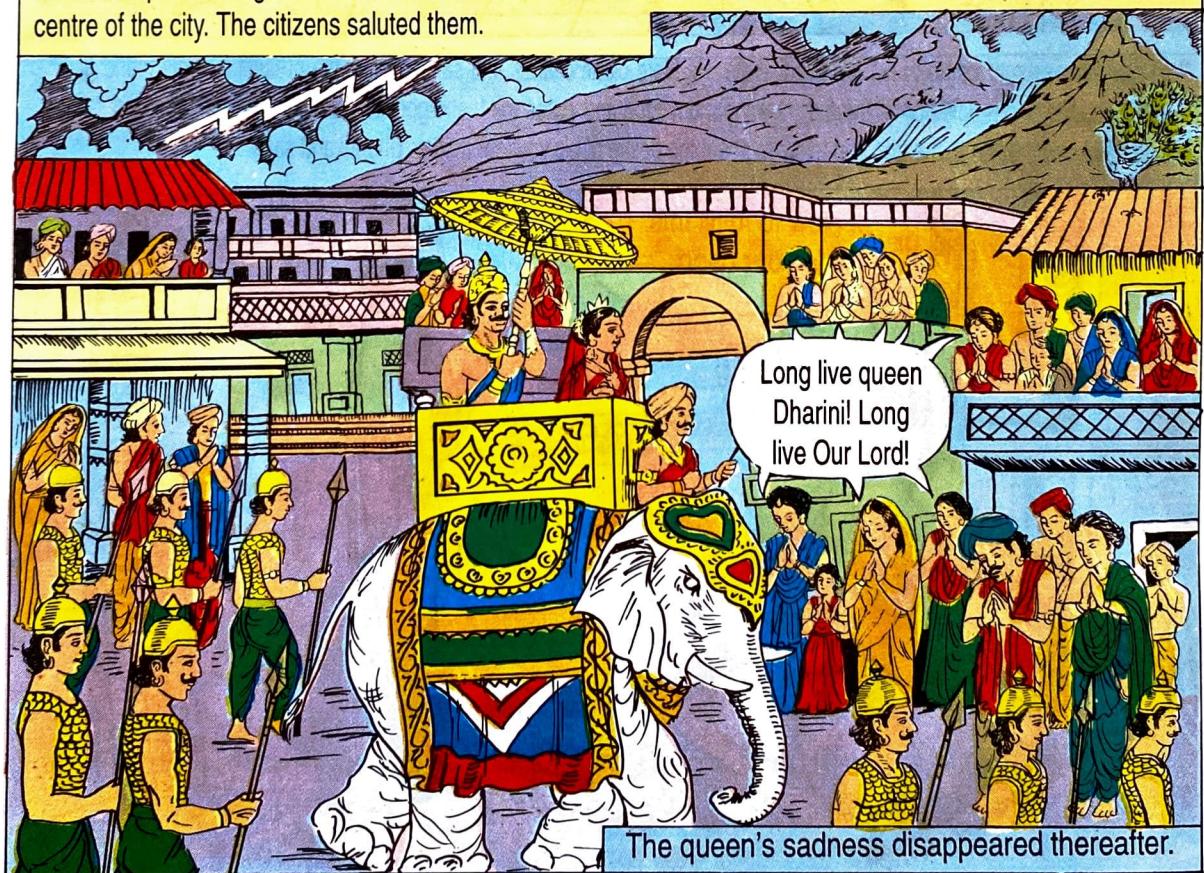
Next day Abhaykumar came to his paushadhshala. He wore clean clothes and sat to invoke the presence of his friend god. Due to penance and meditation of three days without any food and water, the friend god was pleased and he appeared in the sky. Abhay bowed down to the god and told him about the desire of his younger mother Dharini and said-



Next day, due to the divine power of the god, the sky was filled with dark clouds. There were thunder storms with loud noises. It started raining and the whole earth was happy with greenery. King Shrenik told Dharini-



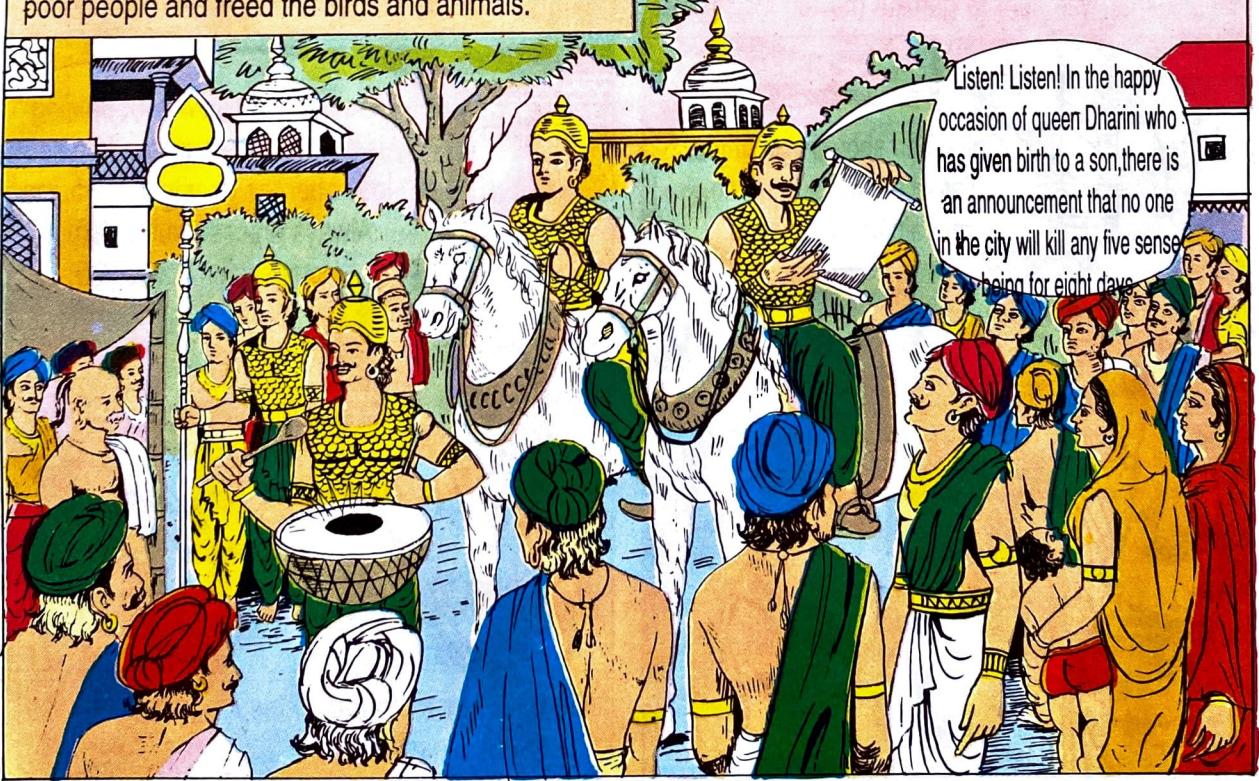
Due to the order of King Shrenik, Abhaykumar made all the arrangements for the outing. Queen Dharini sat on a white elephant. King Shrenik sat behind with decorated umbrella in his hand. Their procession went from the centre of the city. The citizens saluted them.



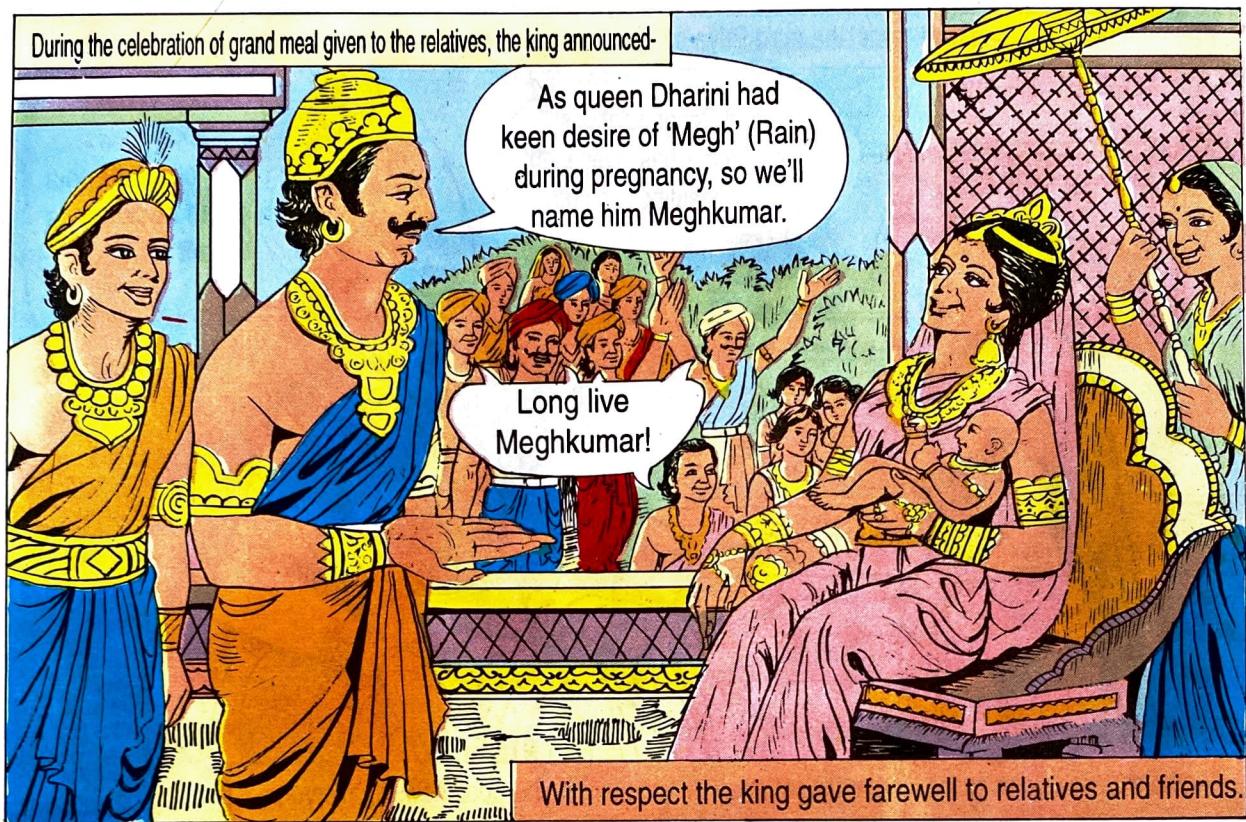
Few months later, when time came, the maid Priyamvada came to the royal hall and congratulated King Shrenik-



A grand festival of eight days was celebrated in the city. The king announced to give food and clothes to poor people and freed the birds and animals.

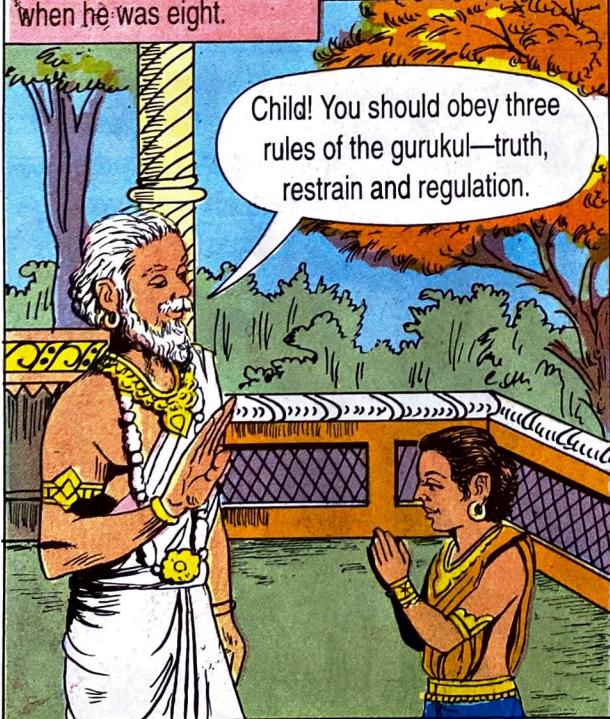


During the celebration of grand meal given to the relatives, the king announced-

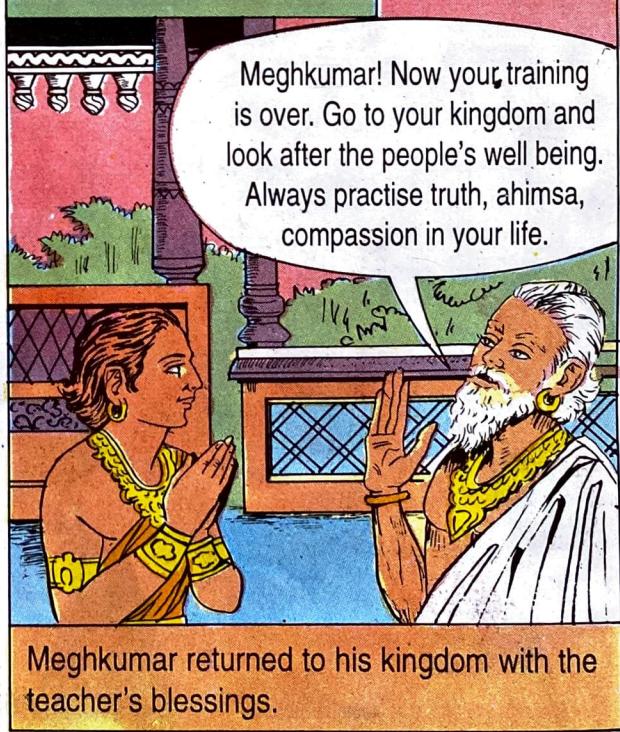


With respect the king gave farewell to relatives and friends.

Meghkumar was brought up with lots of love. Meghkumar was sent to gurukul (hostel) for studies when he was eight.

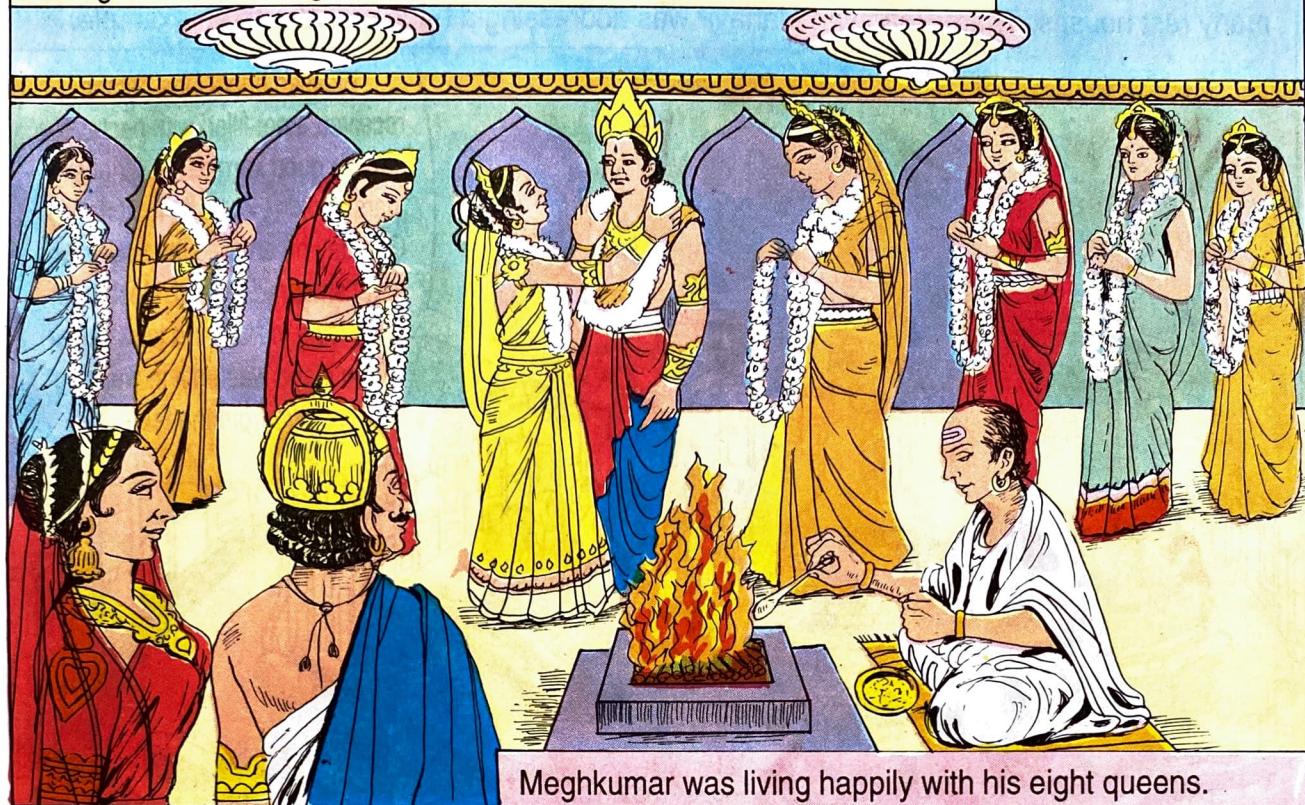


The teacher trained him in all fields for eight years.



Meghkumar returned to his kingdom with the teacher's blessings.

During adulthood, Meghkumar was married to eight beautiful princesses.



Few years later Bhagwan Mahavir came to Rajgruhi, the capital of Magadh. Seeing the crowd of people going to salute Bhagwan, Meghkumar asked the door keeper of the palace,



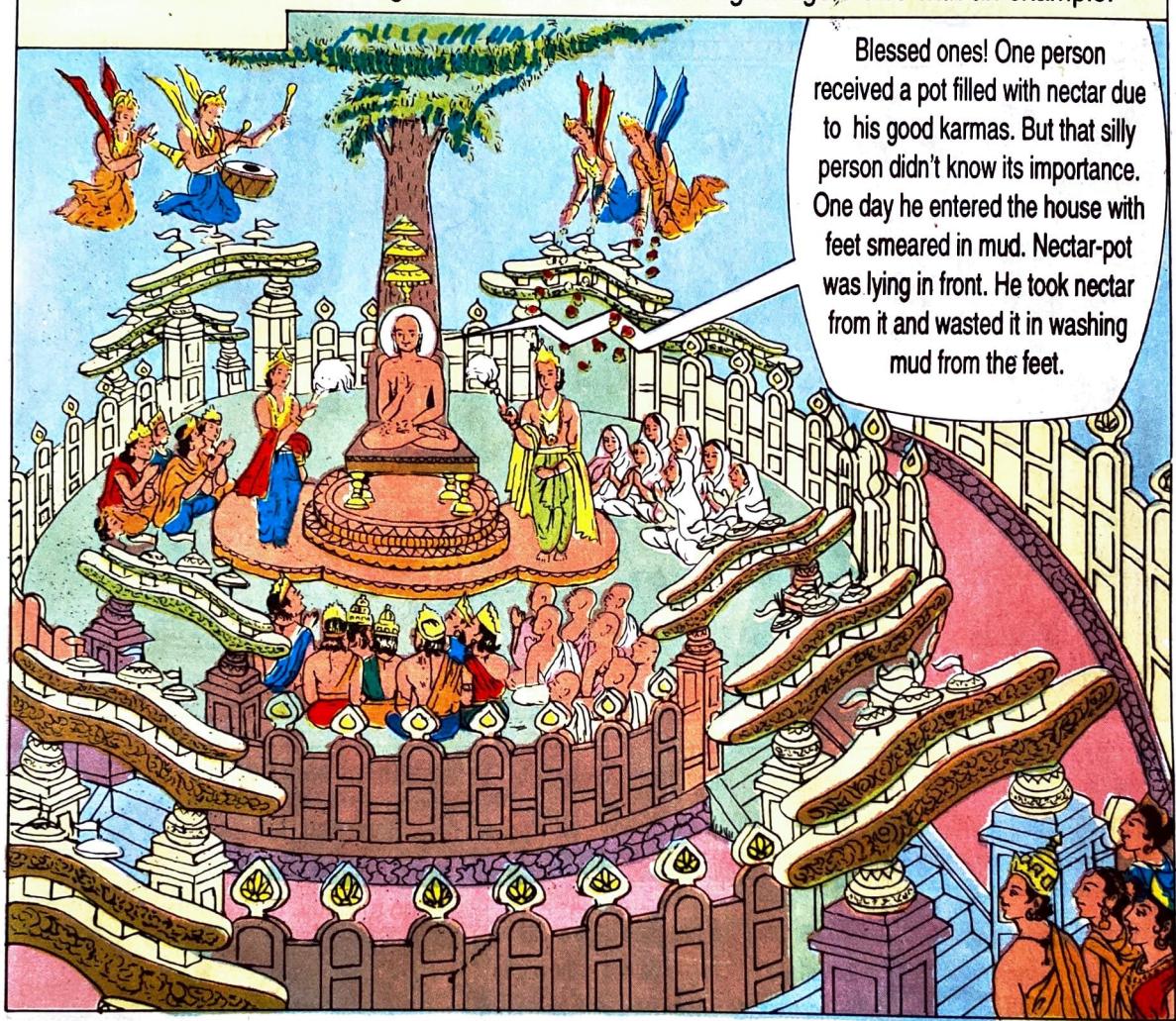
Meghkumar said happily-

Bhagwan has arrived? Wow! Even I'll go to salute him.



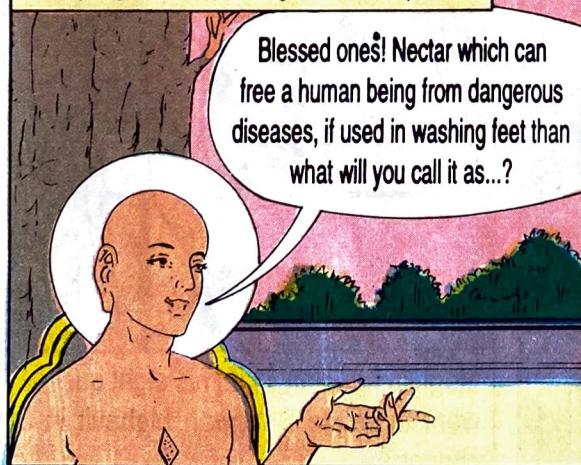
Meghkumar along with his eight queens went to salute Bhagwan Mahavir in a chariot.

Gunsheel garden located at the foot of the five mountains contained many beautiful trees and many rest houses. There Bhagwan Mahavir was addressing a huge crowd with an example.



Blessed ones! One person received a pot filled with nectar due to his good karmas. But that silly person didn't know its importance. One day he entered the house with feet smeared in mud. Nectar-pot was lying in front. He took nectar from it and wasted it in washing mud from the feet.

After giving this example Bhagwan asked a question-

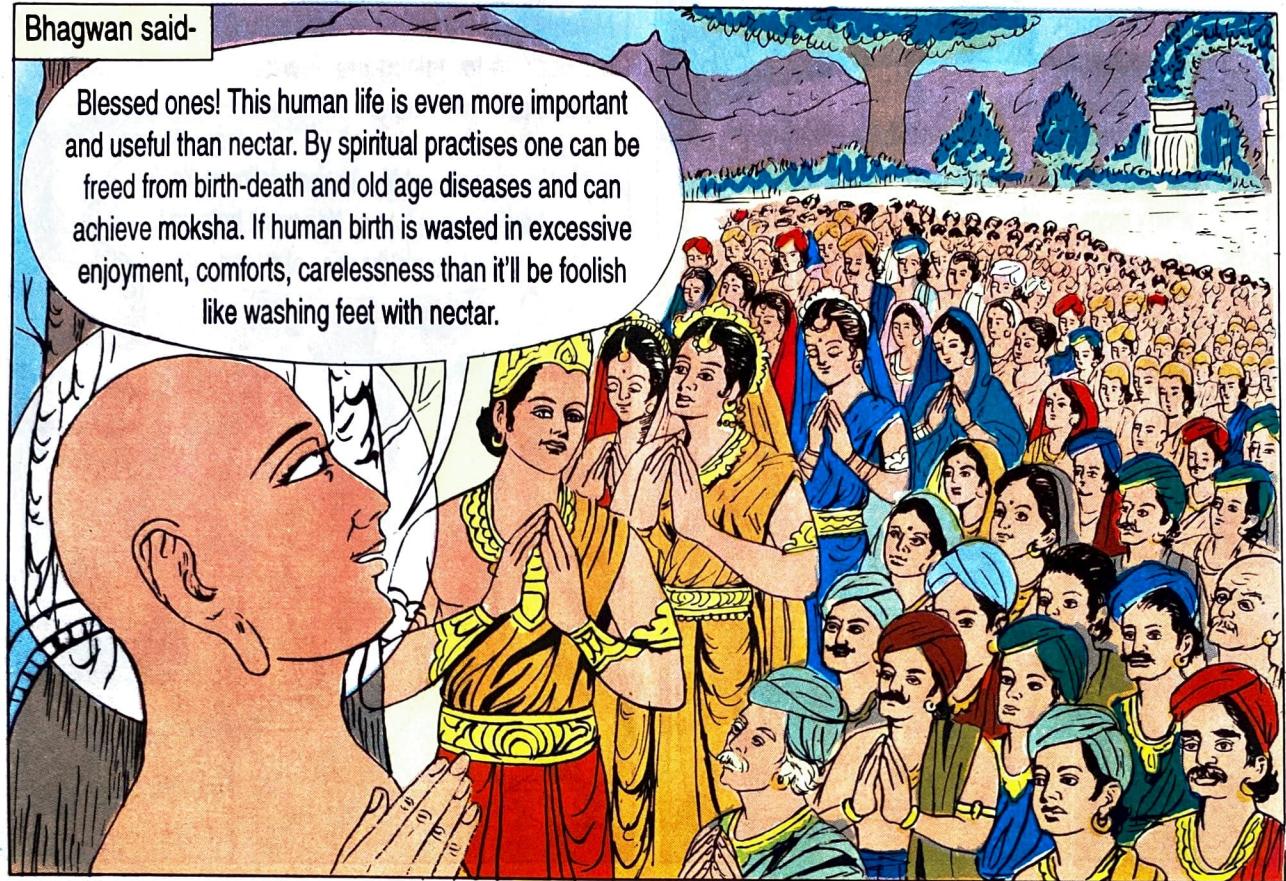


All the people said politely-



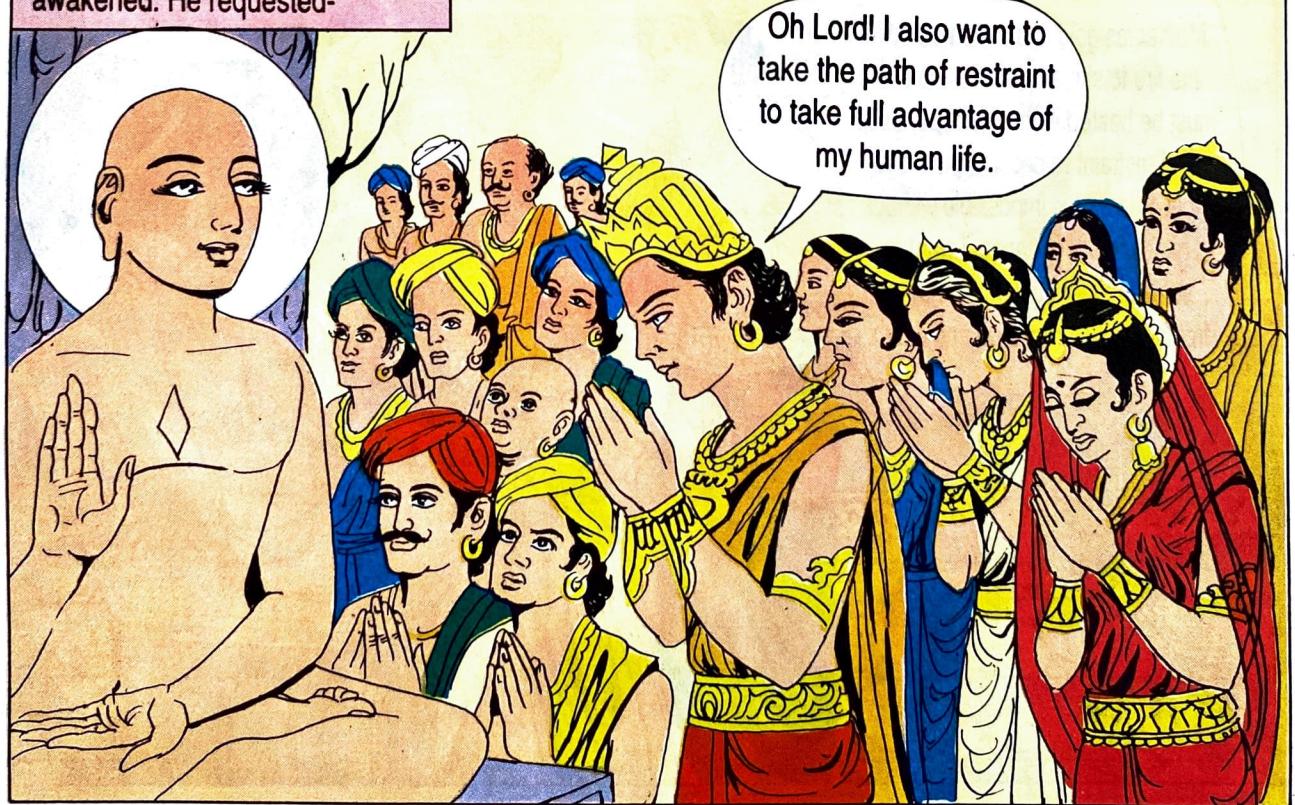
Bhagwan said-

Blessed ones! This human life is even more important and useful than nectar. By spiritual practises one can be freed from birth-death and old age diseases and can achieve moksha. If human birth is wasted in excessive enjoyment, comforts, carelessness than it'll be foolish like washing feet with nectar.



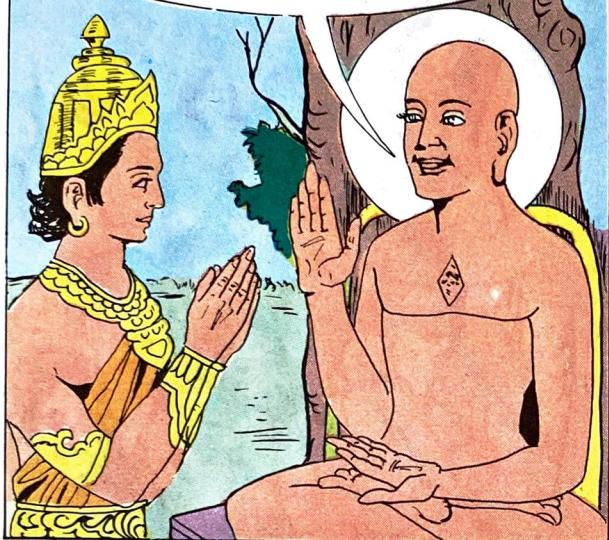
Listening to Bhagwan's sermon, many people took vow of renunciation and restraint. Meghkumar was also awoken. He requested-

Oh Lord! I also want to take the path of restraint to take full advantage of my human life.



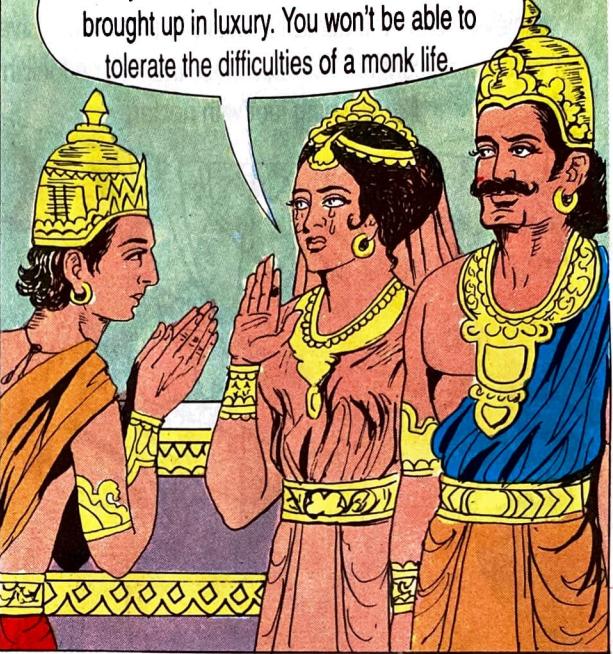
Bhagwan said-

Megh! Path of restraint is very difficult, like walking on the edge of a sword. But for souls who have no attachment to worldly things and who have strong will power it is like a royal path of flowers. You do as your soul feels good.



Meghkumar came home and asked permission from his parents for taking the vow of monkhood. Queen Dharini said with tears-

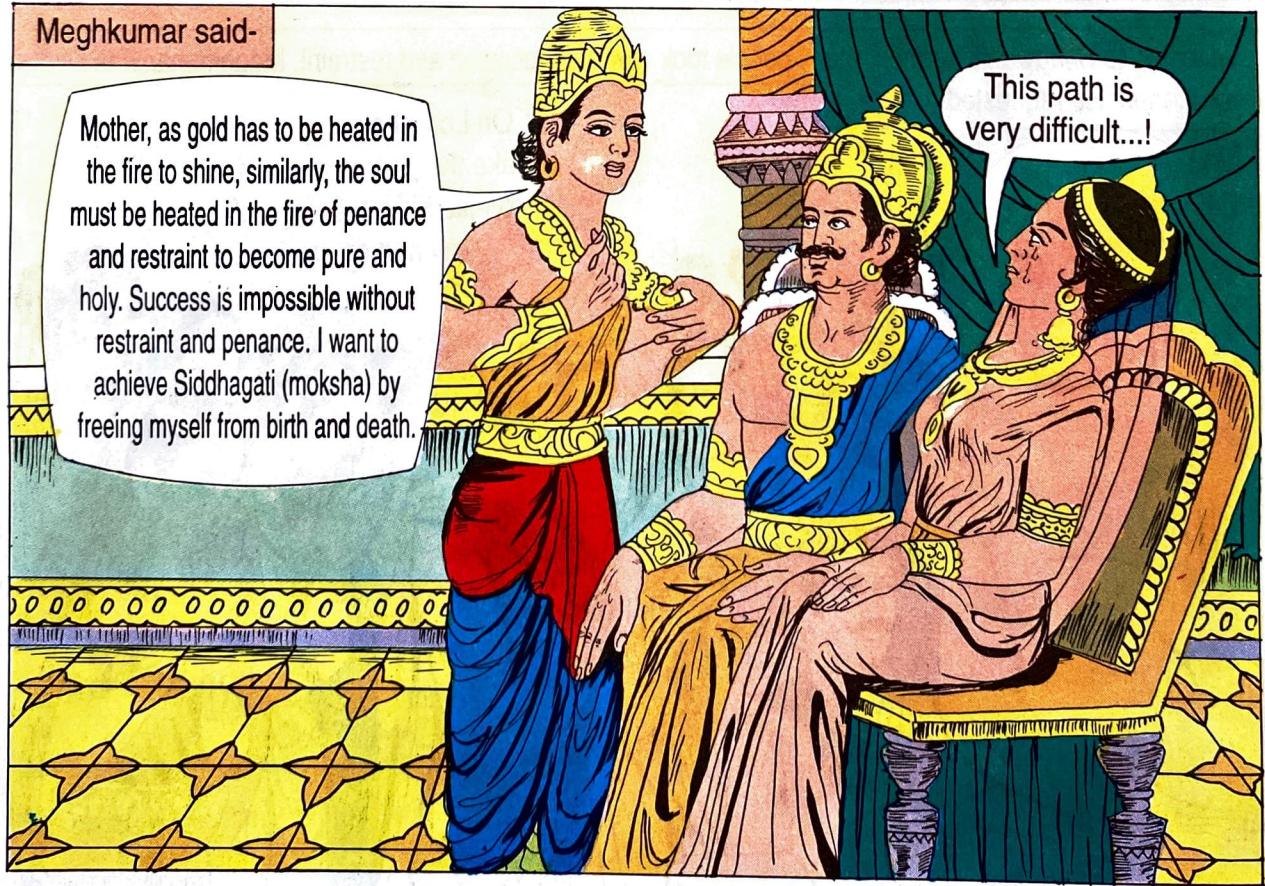
No, my son, no! You're very delicate. You're brought up in luxury. You won't be able to tolerate the difficulties of a monk life.



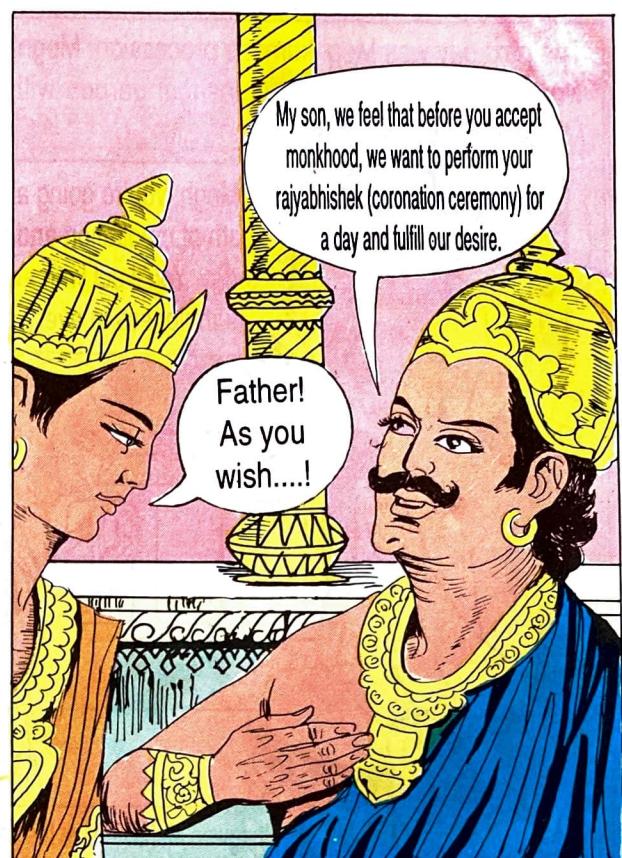
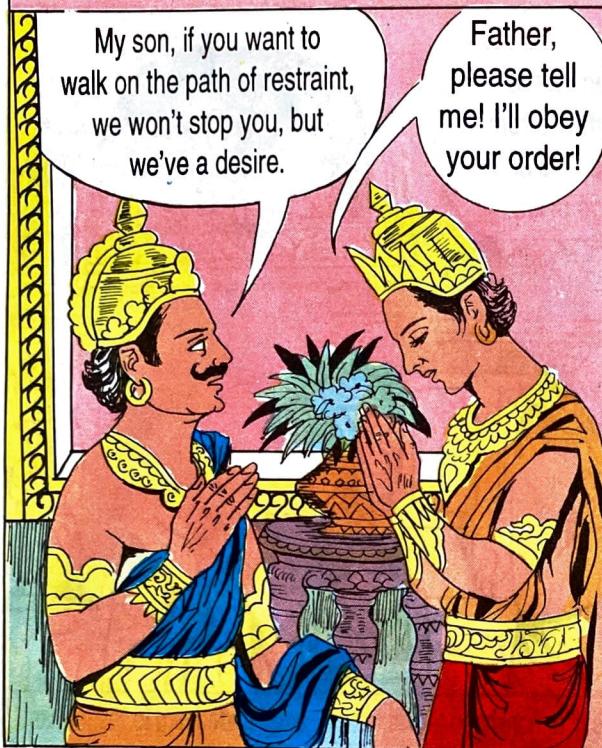
Meghkumar said-

Mother, as gold has to be heated in the fire to shine, similarly, the soul must be heated in the fire of penance and restraint to become pure and holy. Success is impossible without restraint and penance. I want to achieve Siddhagati (moksha) by freeing myself from birth and death.

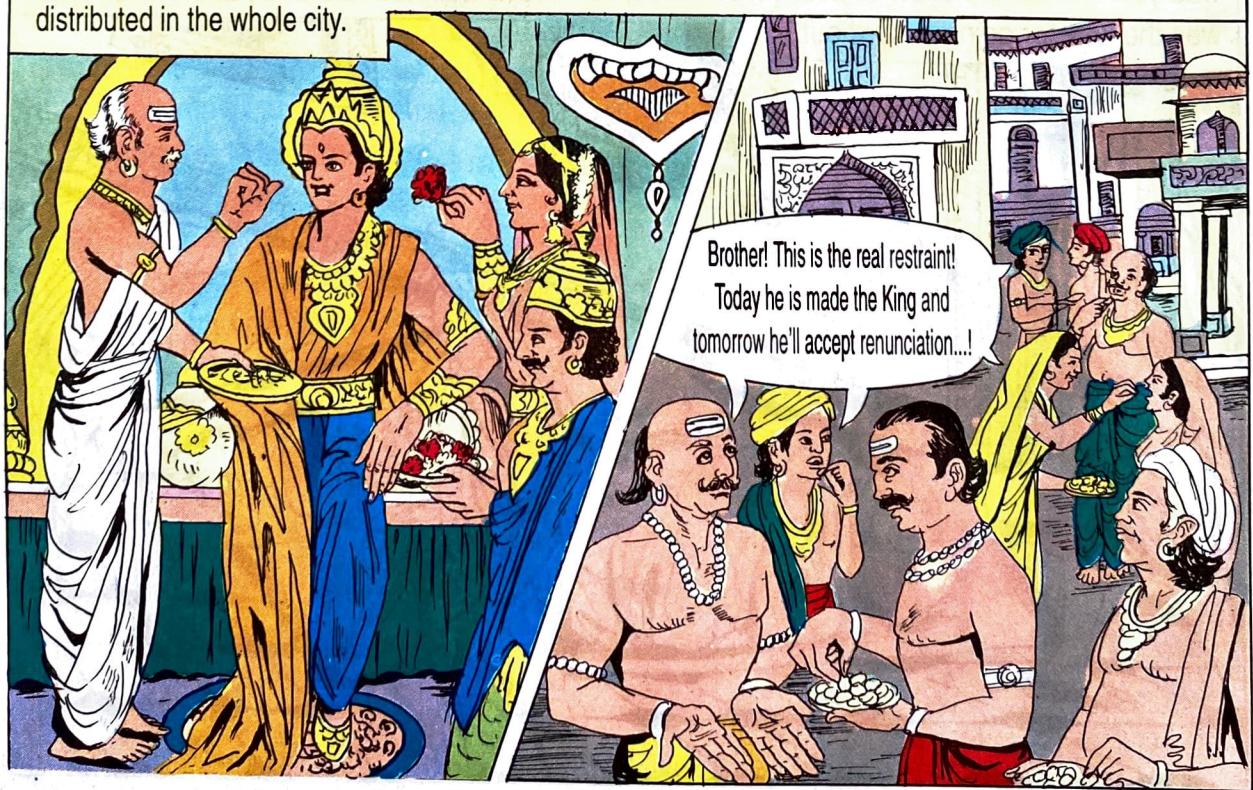
This path is very difficult....!



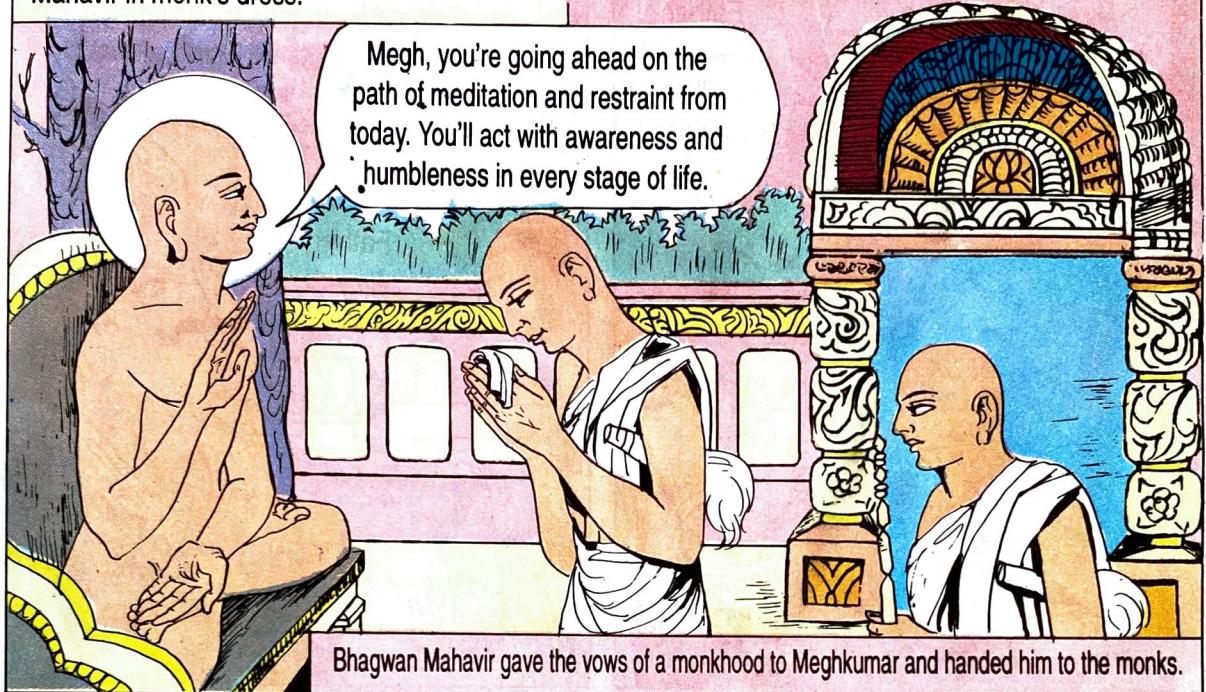
Meghkumar didn't change his decision even after his parents request. Then king Shrenik said-



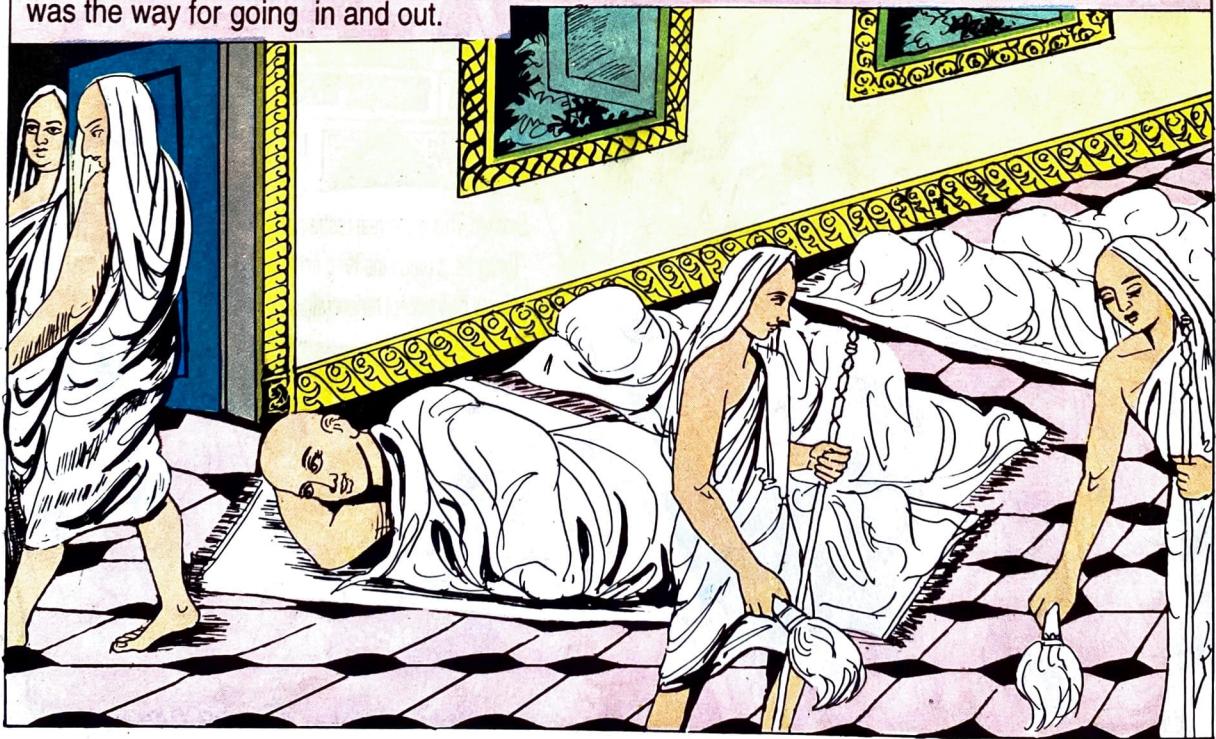
Meghkumar's rajyabhishek was celebrated with the permission of the king. The priest applied red dot on his forehead. Parents blessed him. People congratulated and gifted him. Sweets and gold coins were distributed in the whole city.



The next day was Meghkumar's procession. Meghkumar was made to sit on a grand chair. Thousands of women and men reached Gunsheel garden with loud proclamation. Meghkumar came to Bhagwan Mahavir in monk's dress.



At night while going to sleep, all the monks made their beds in line in a large hall. Megh-muni was youngest in the order of taking monkhood, so his bed was near the door, at the end. That was the way for going in and out.



Meghmuni's sleep was disturbed at night by the touch of the feet of the monks going out for urination.



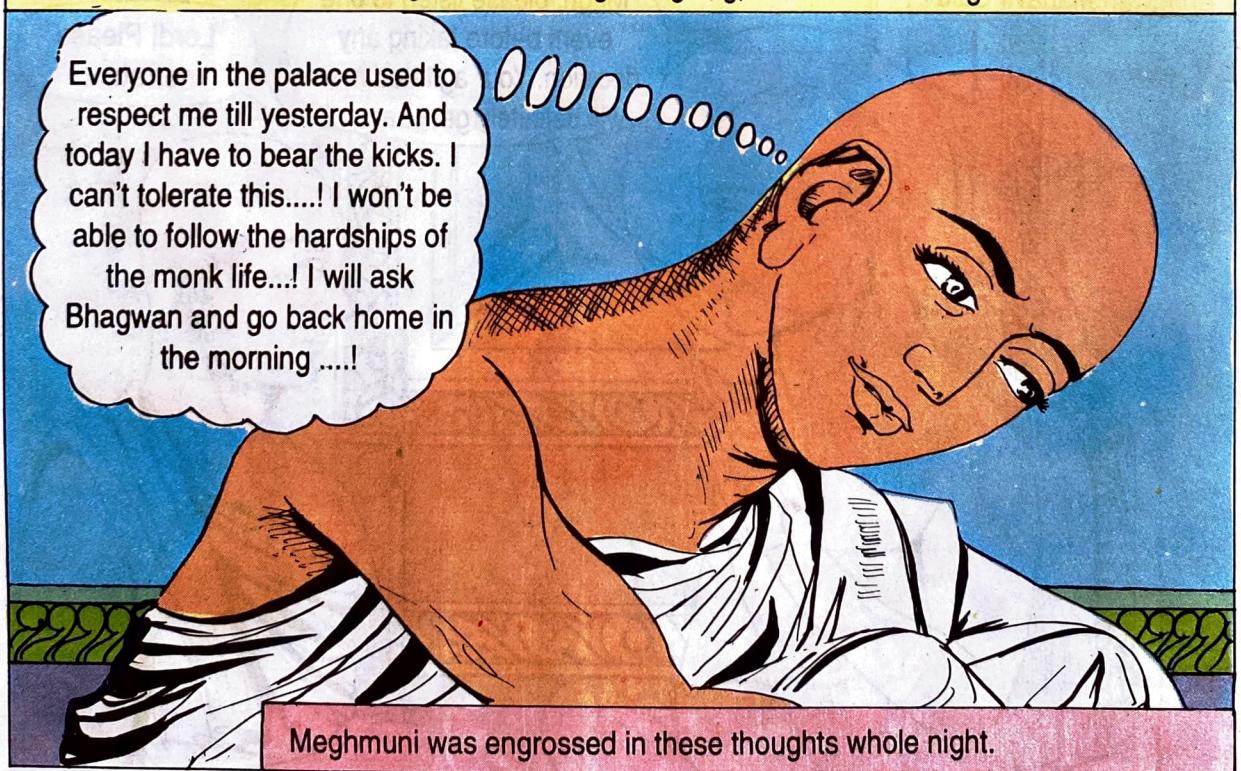
Meghmuni was disturbed and agitated due to the sleepless night. He thought-

I was sleeping on the soft bed in royal palace till yesterday. Today I had to sleep on the floor and remained awake due to the noise of the feet of monks. How difficult is this monk life? I can't tolerate such miseries for the life time...



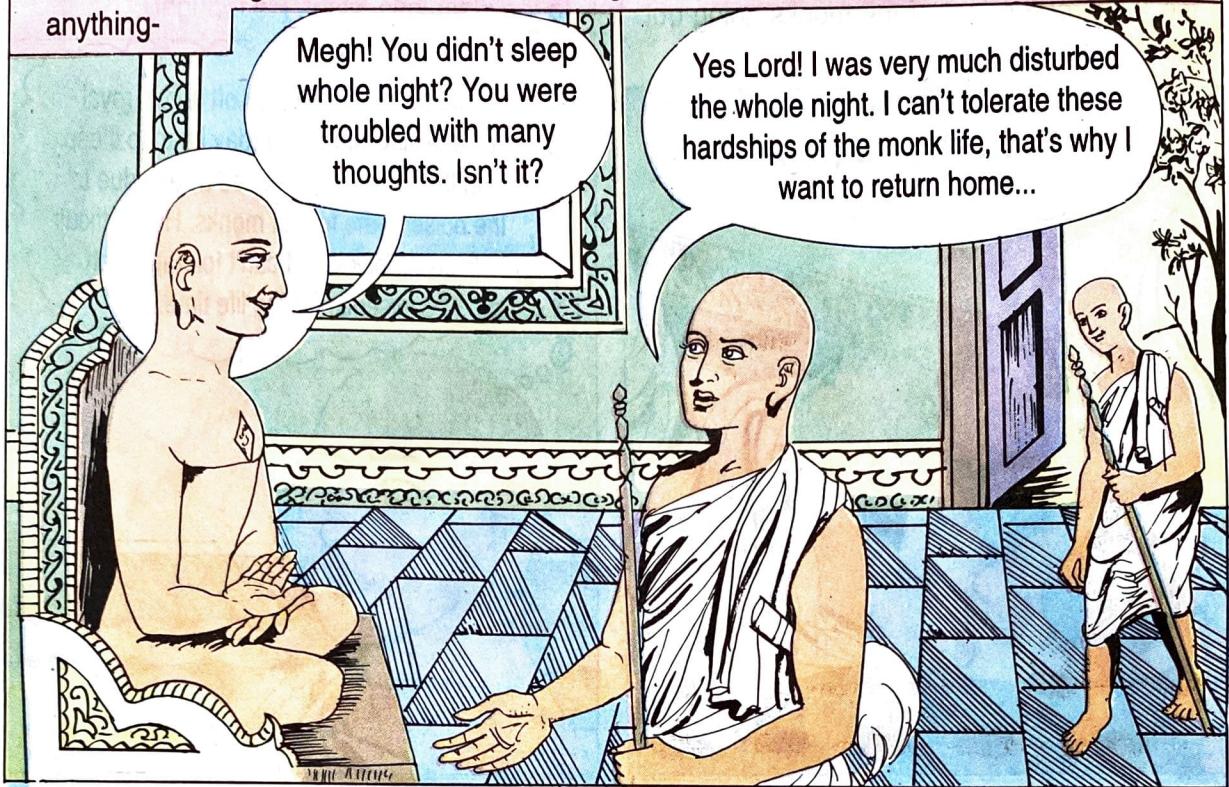
Meghmuni felt dejected. Seeing monks coming and going, he started thinking-

Everyone in the palace used to respect me till yesterday. And today I have to bear the kicks. I can't tolerate this....! I won't be able to follow the hardships of the monk life...! I will ask Bhagwan and go back home in the morning!

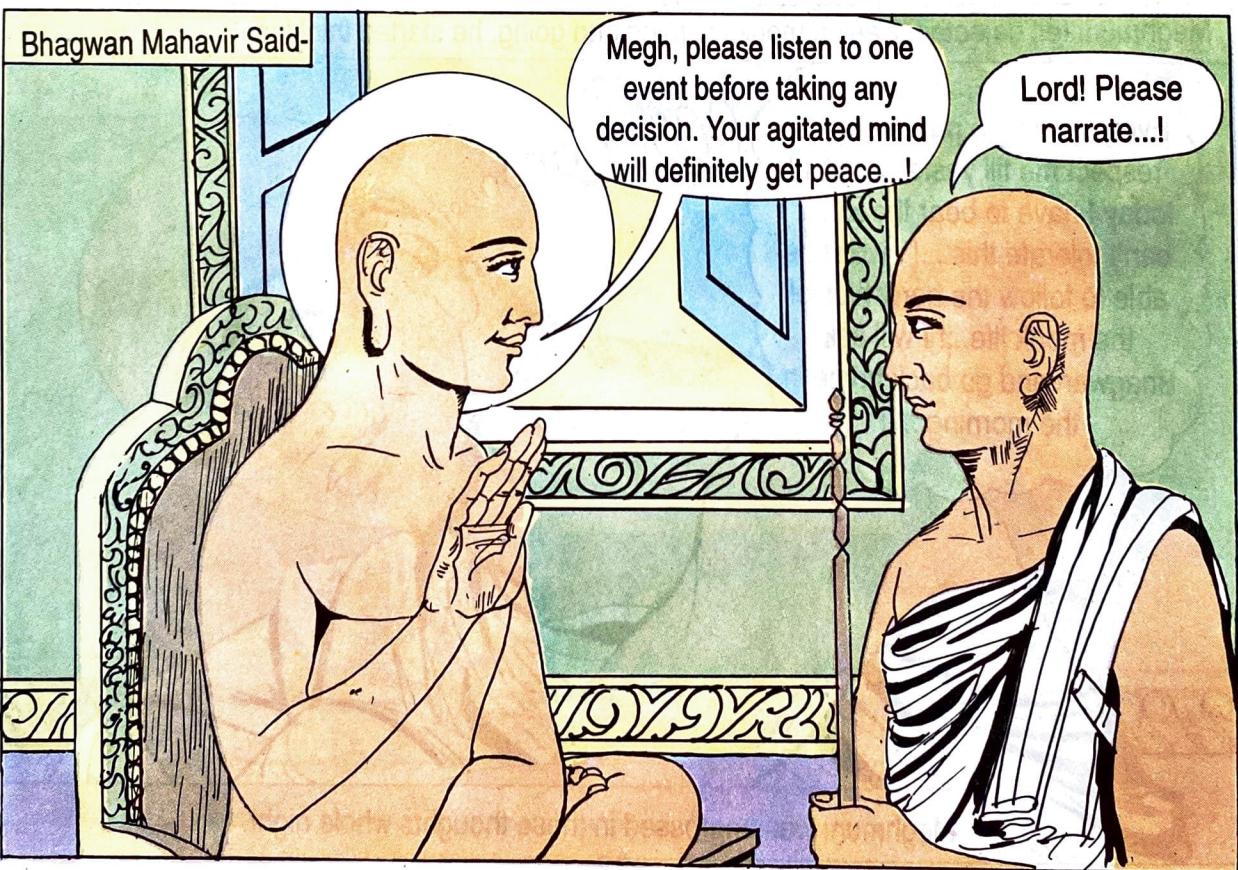


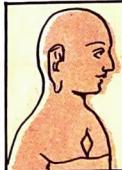
Meghmuni was engrossed in these thoughts whole night.

He went to Bhagwan Mahavir in the morning. Bhagwan Mahavir asked him before he said anything-

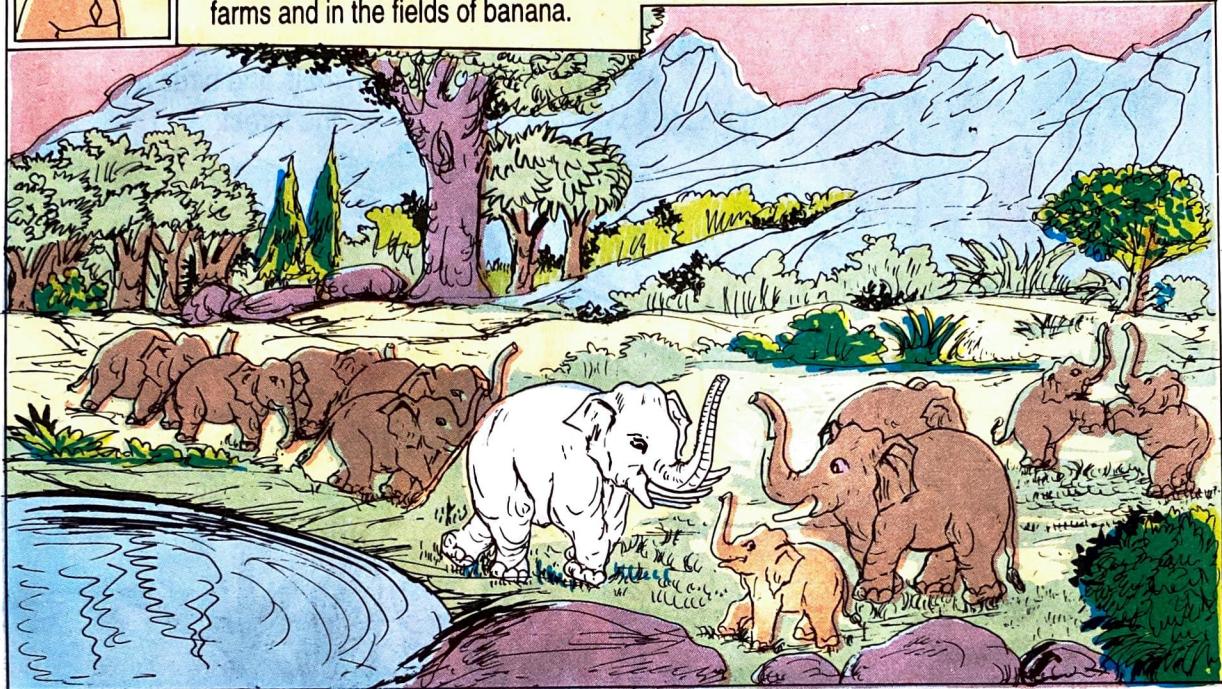


Bhagwan Mahavir Said-

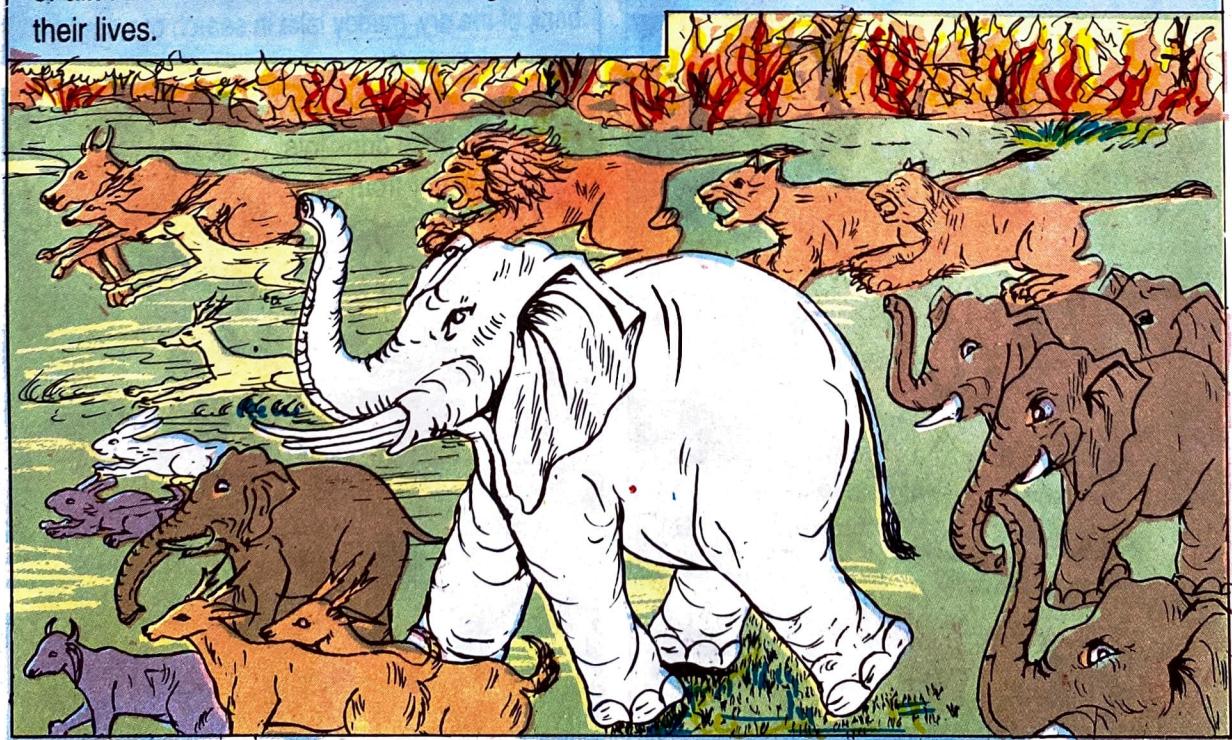




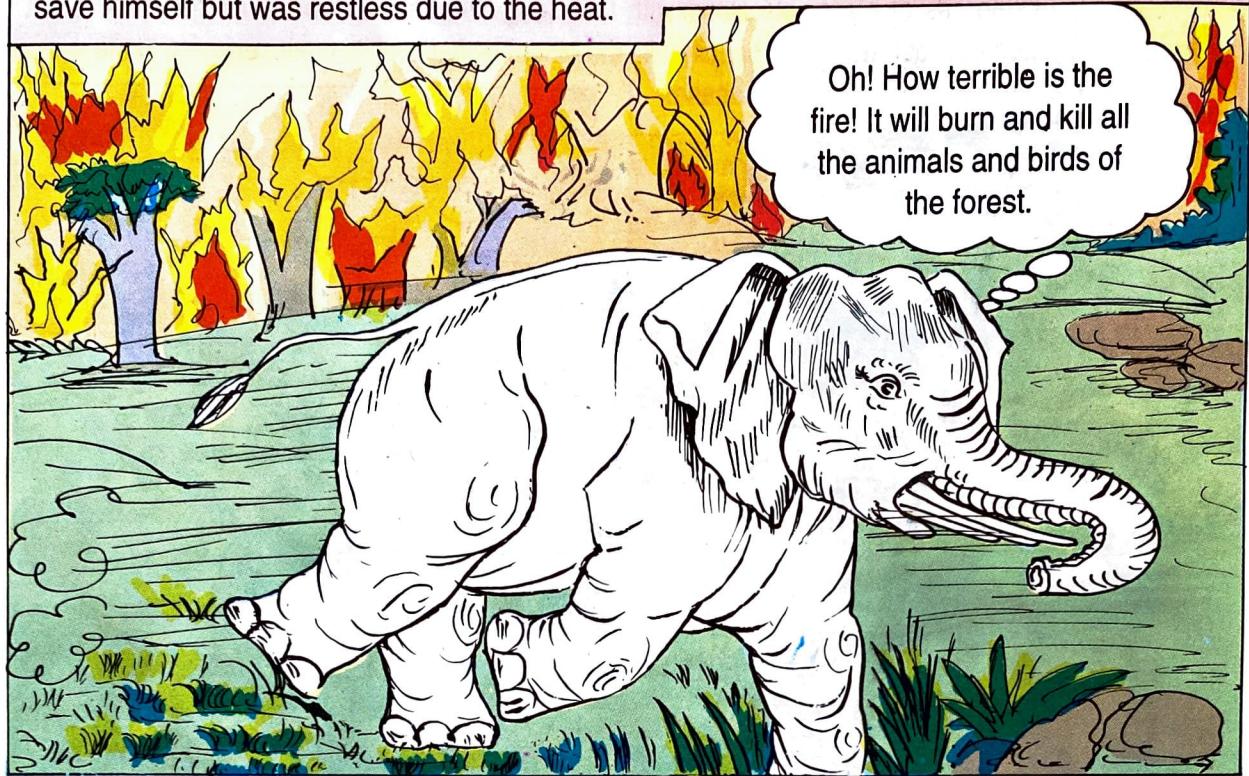
Many years ago, there was a huge green forest in the root of Vaitadhyagiri mountain. Hundreds of elephants along with their king Sumeruprabh were living in that forest. Sumeruprabh was living happily with the other elephants of its group, enjoying in the rivers, farms and in the fields of banana.



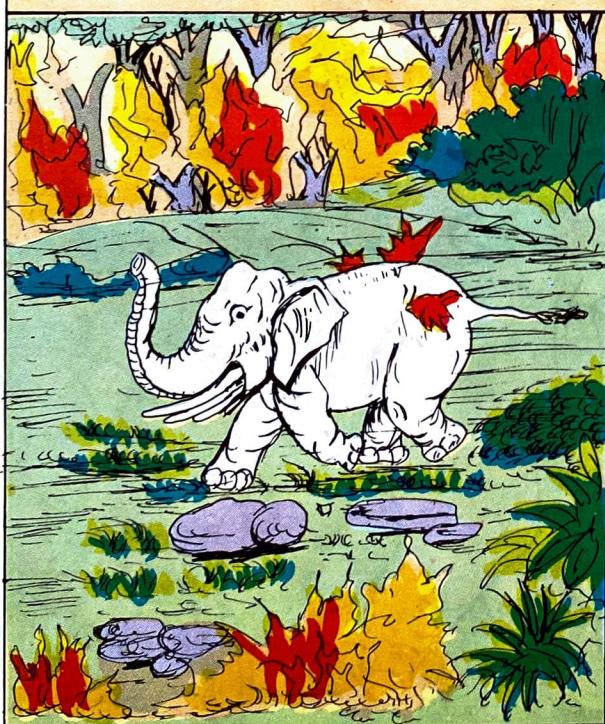
Once the forest was caught by fire during summer. It spread in the whole forest with the draft of air. All the wild animals like lion, tiger, deer, rabbit etc. were running here and there to save their lives.



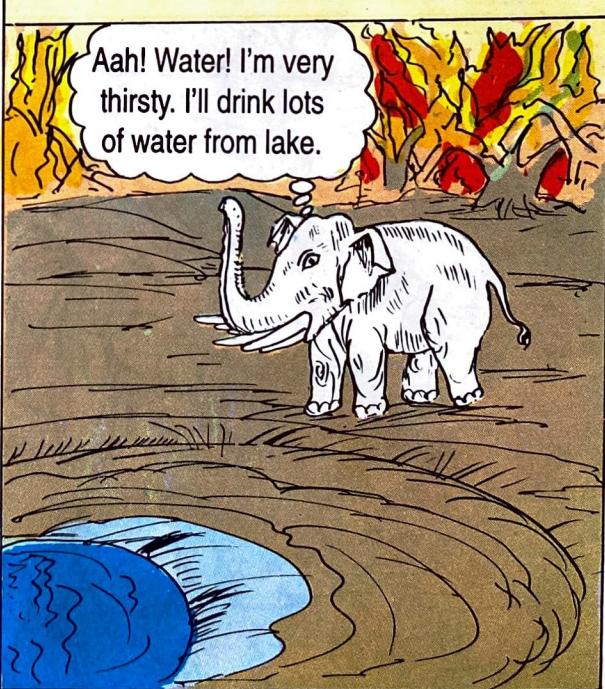
At that time, the king of elephants, Sumeruprabh, who had become old and weak was trying to save himself but was restless due to the heat.



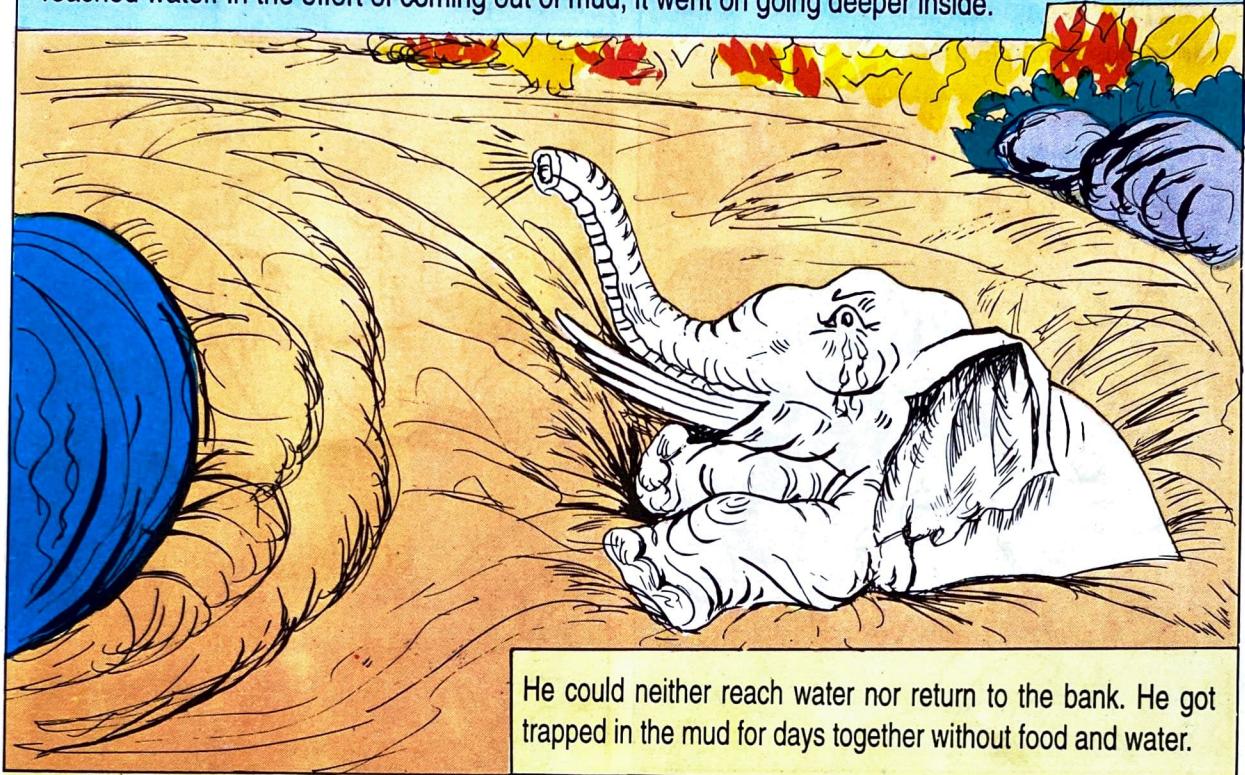
The sparks of fire were falling on its body and the skin was getting burnt.



Sumeruprabh's throat parched due to heat. He wondered here and there and reached near the bank of the dry, muddy lake in search of water.

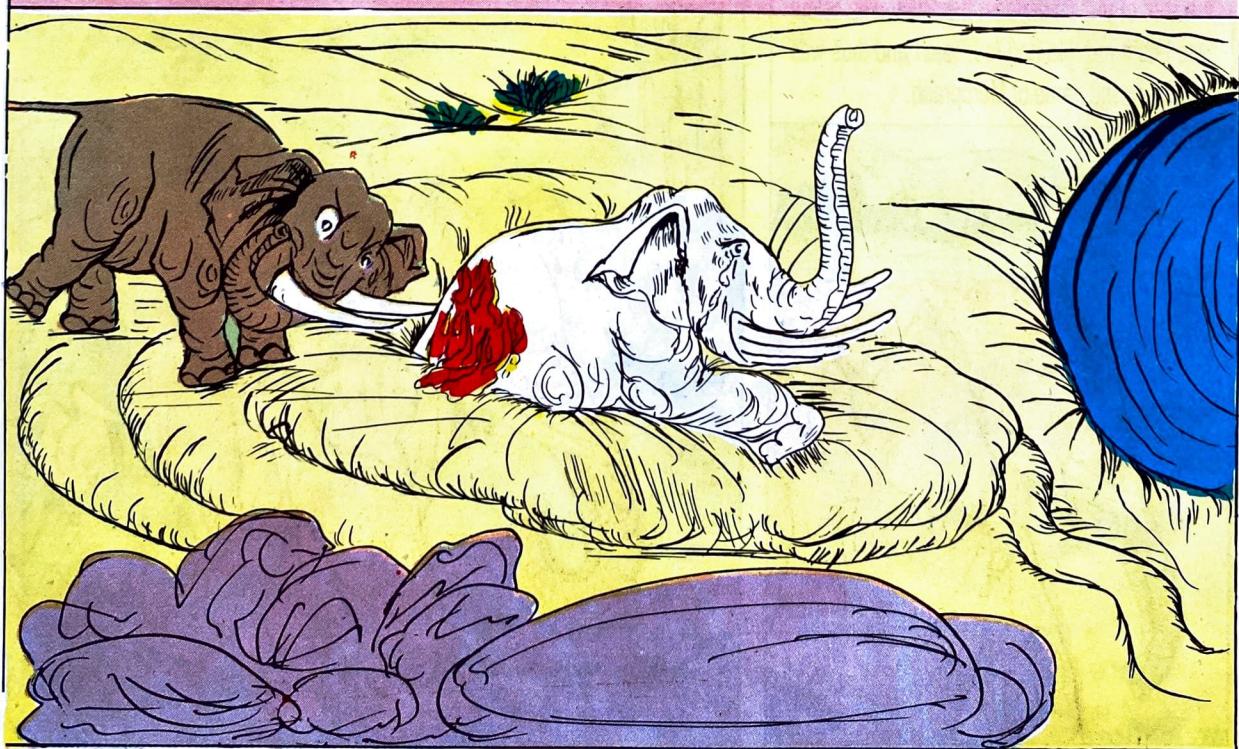


Lake had less of water and more of mud. Sumeruprabh was going deep inside the mud before he reached water. In the effort of coming out of mud, it went on going deeper inside.



He could neither reach water nor return to the bank. He got trapped in the mud for days together without food and water.

During this period, a young elephant came there who had grudges towards Sumeruprabh. He saw this as a good chance to take revenge, so he hurted Sumeruprabh through its sharp teeth which made Sumeruprabh bleed.

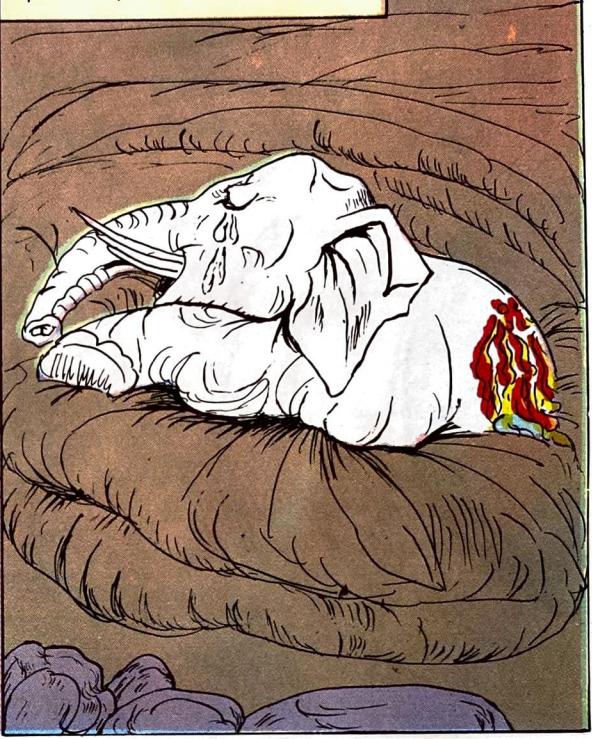


INSPIRING STORY OF MEGHKUMAR

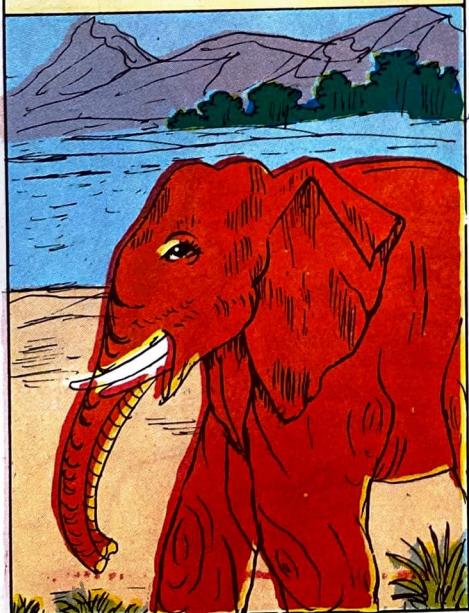
Sumeruprabh was screaming for help but no one came to help him due to the fear of that dangerous young elephant.



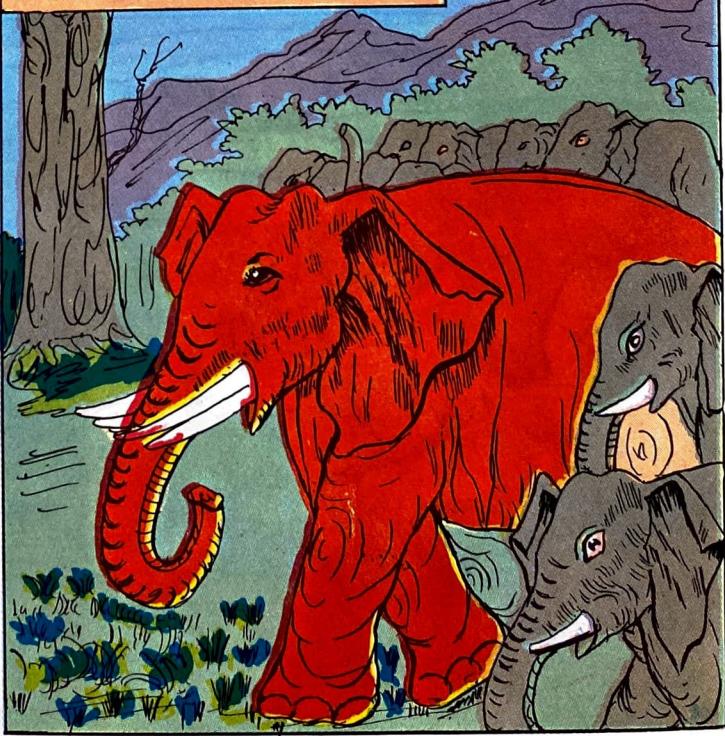
One day wounded Sumeruprabh died moaning with pain and pined for food and water.



That elephant was once again reborn as an elephant at the south bank of the Ganga river at the root of the Vindhya mountain. His colour was bright red. He had four teeth and thus was famous by the name of Meruprabh.

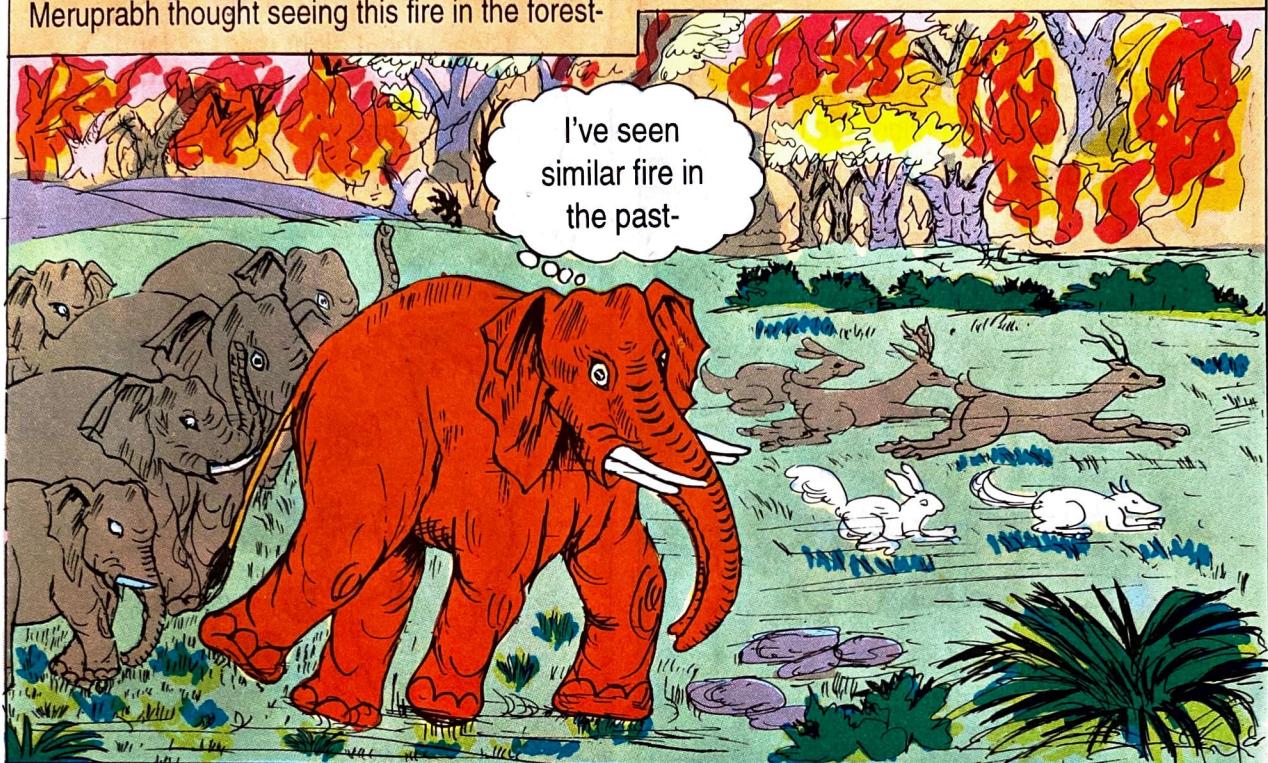


In his youth he became the king of his group. Hundreds of elephants followed him.

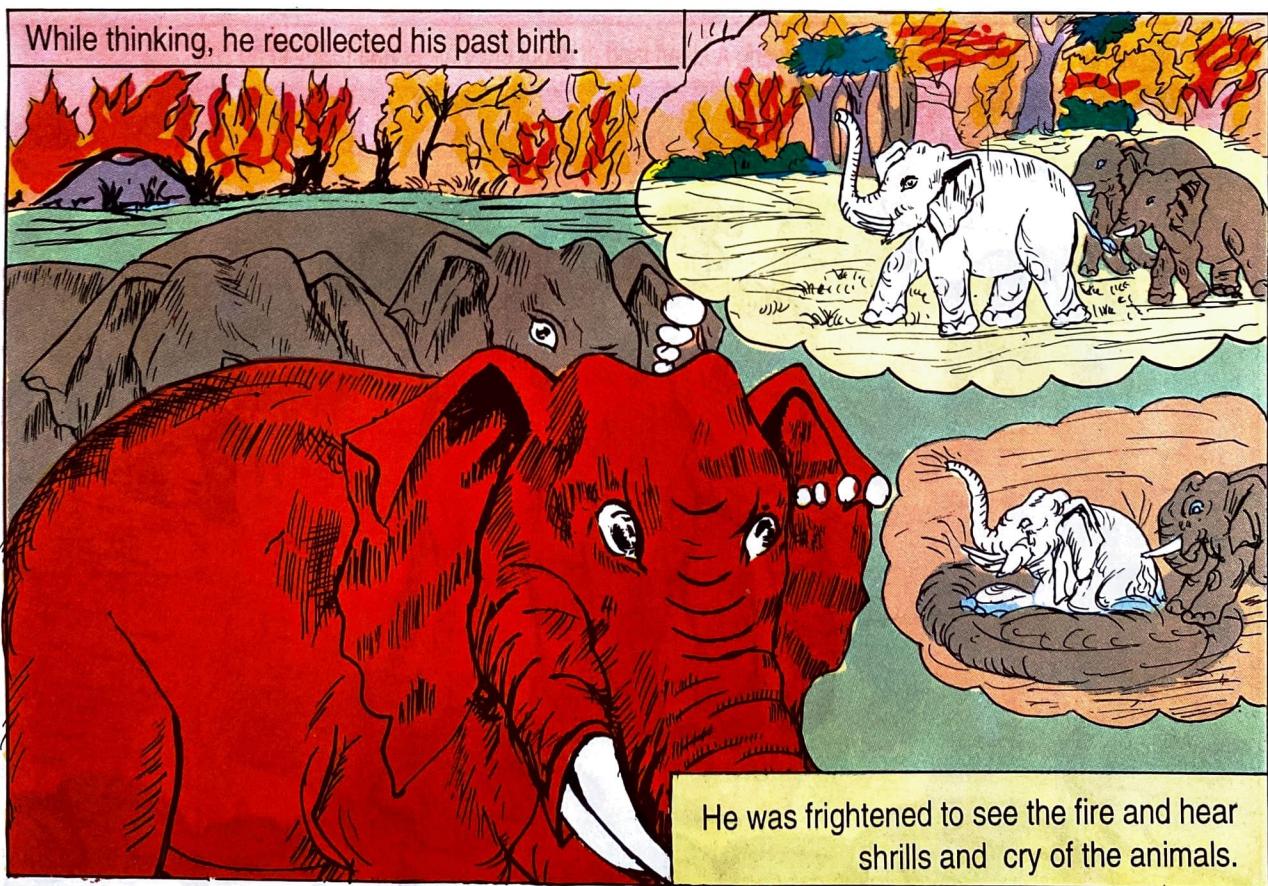


INSPIRING STORY OF MEGHKUMAR

Once severe fire caught the bamboo forest of Vindhya-giri. The animals ran here and there. The king of elephants, Meruprabh also ran here and there with other elephants to save his life. Meruprabh thought seeing this fire in the forest-

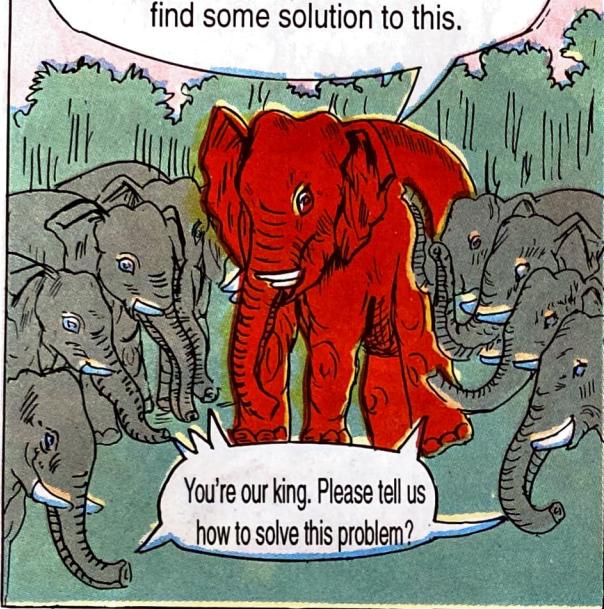


While thinking, he recollected his past birth.



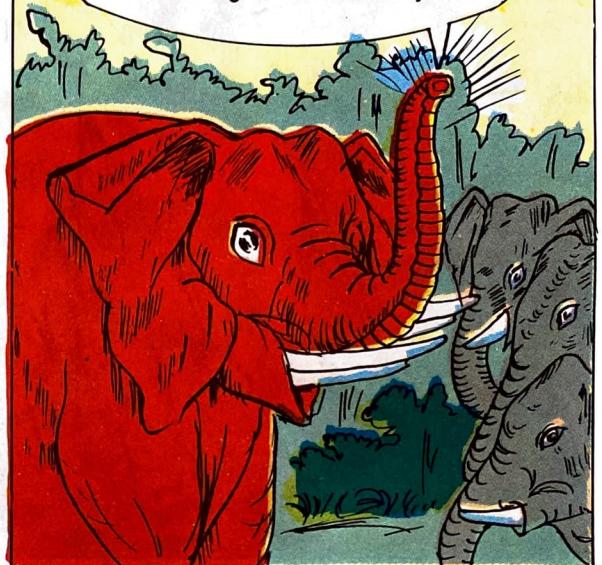
When fire subsided he told his colleagues-

There are recurrent fires during summer in the forest and we've to face severe destruction. We must find some solution to this.

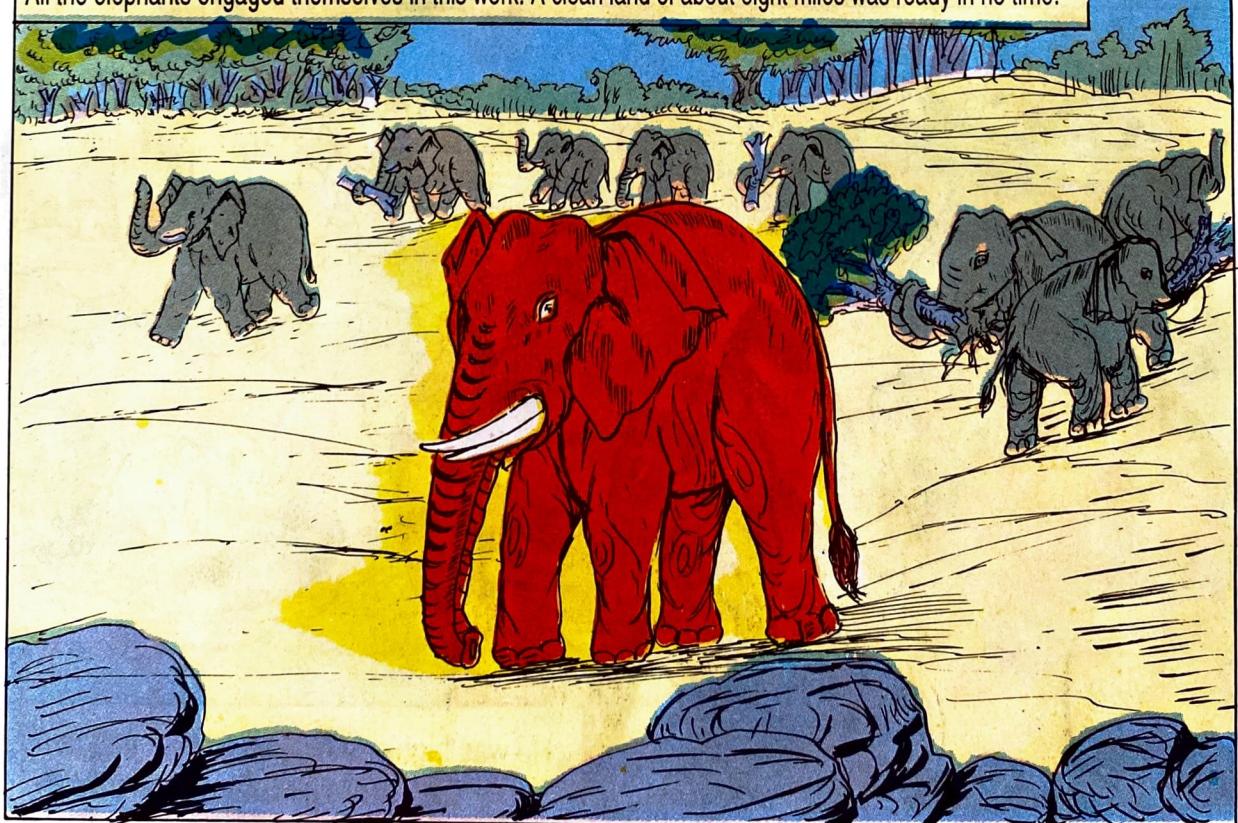


Meruprabh ordered-

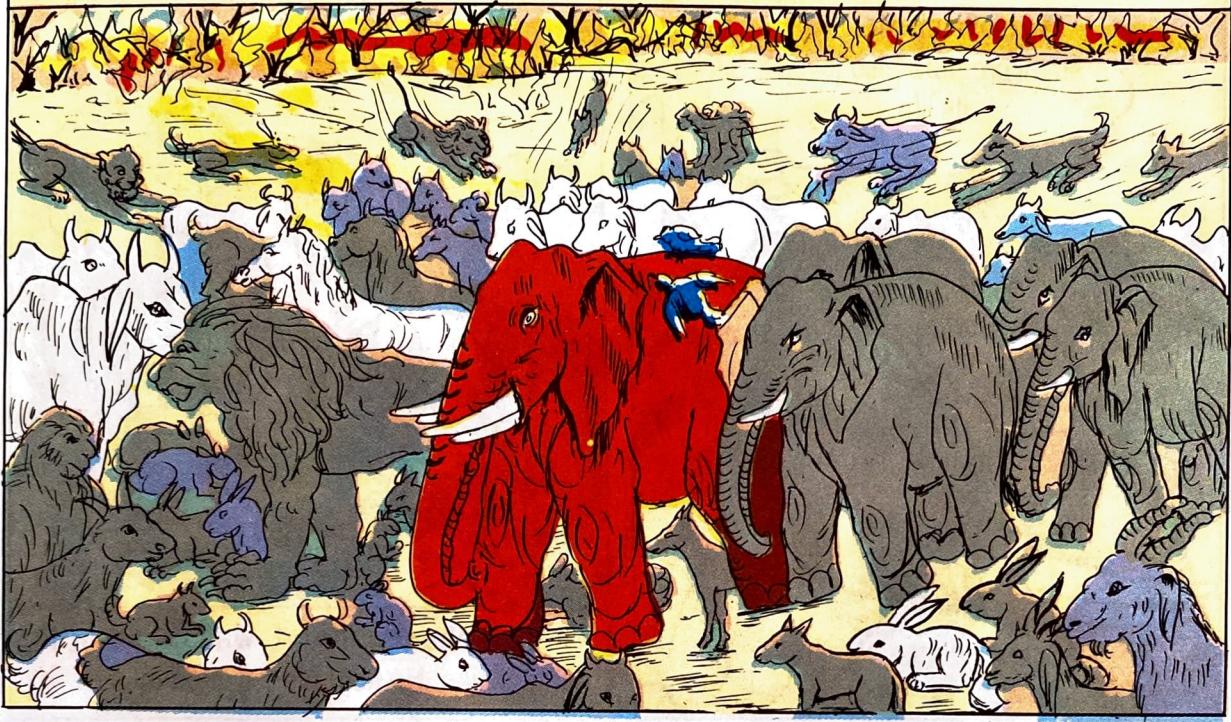
Clean about eight miles of land completely without a single straw in it. This land will be helpful to us during such adversity.



All the elephants engaged themselves in this work. A clean land of about eight miles was ready in no time.



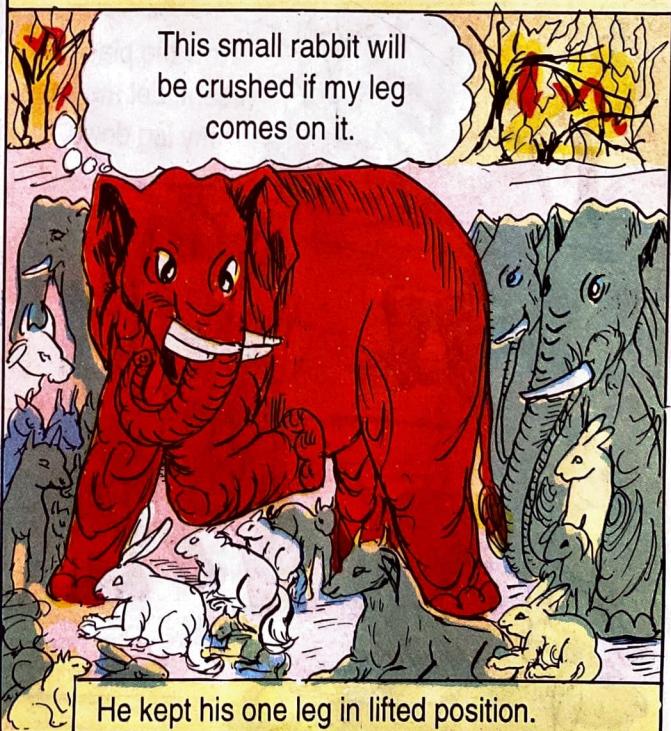
Once again there was fire in the forest. All the wild animals ran from all the sides and gathered in that land. Meruprabh also with his elephant family came there for shelter. The whole land was crowded with the wild animals. There was no space at all.



Suddenly Meruprabh felt an itch on his stomach. He lifted his one leg. A small rabbit came and sat there as it found some space.



Meruprabh saw a small rabbit while keeping his leg down. His heart filled with compassion.

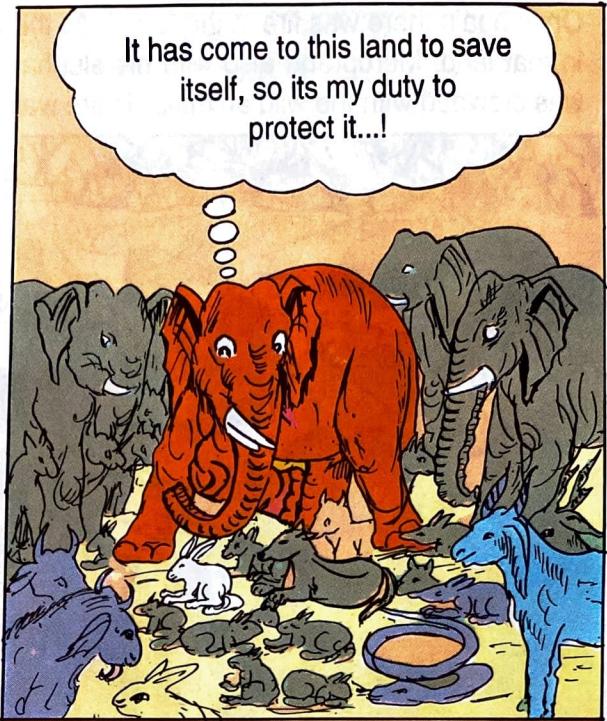
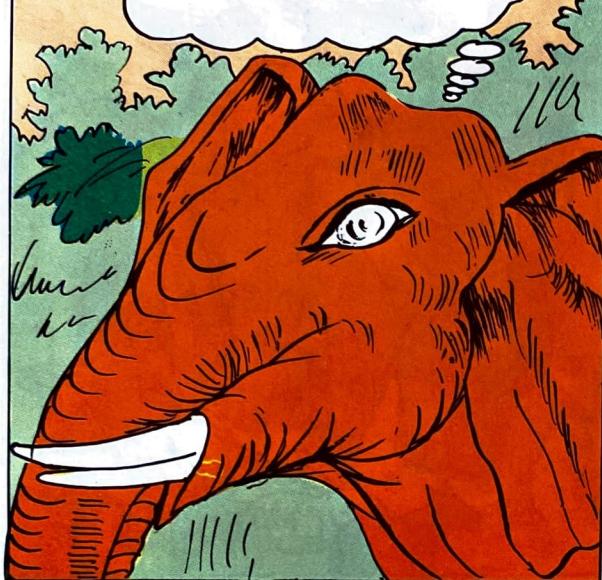


He kept his one leg in lifted position.

With one leg lifted he thought-

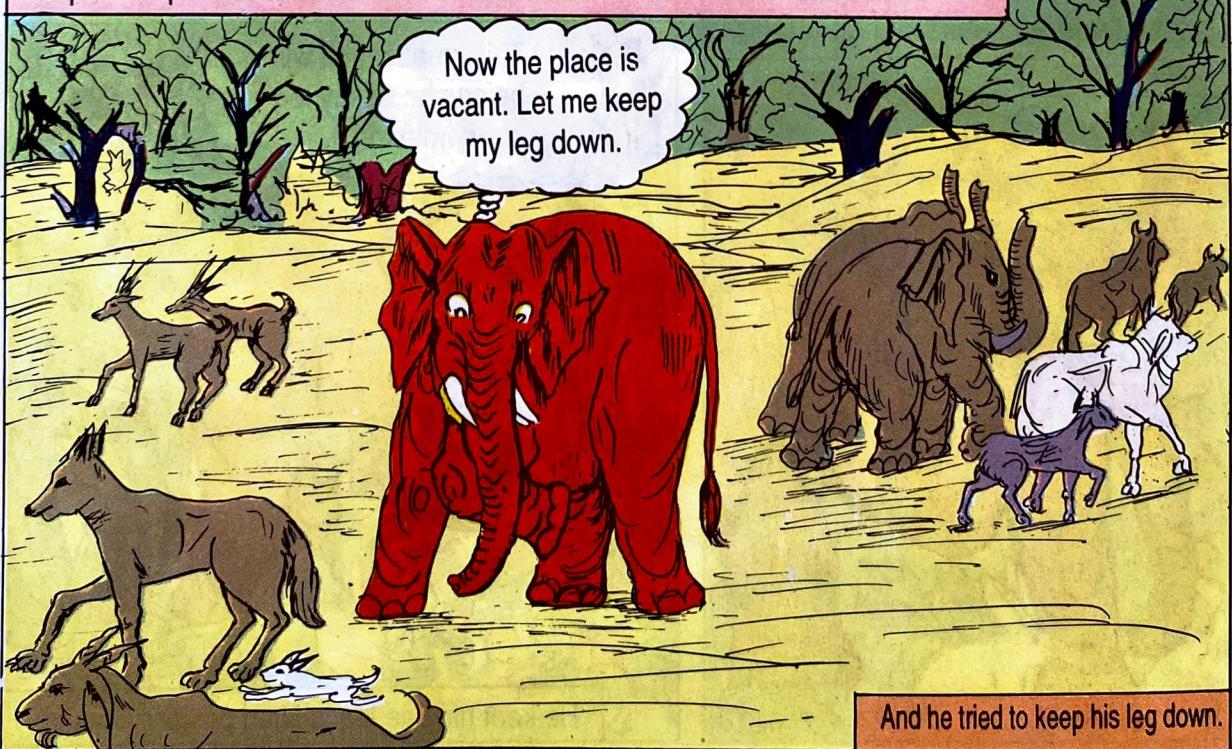
As I love my life, this small creature also loves its life.

It has come to this land to save itself, so its my duty to protect it...!

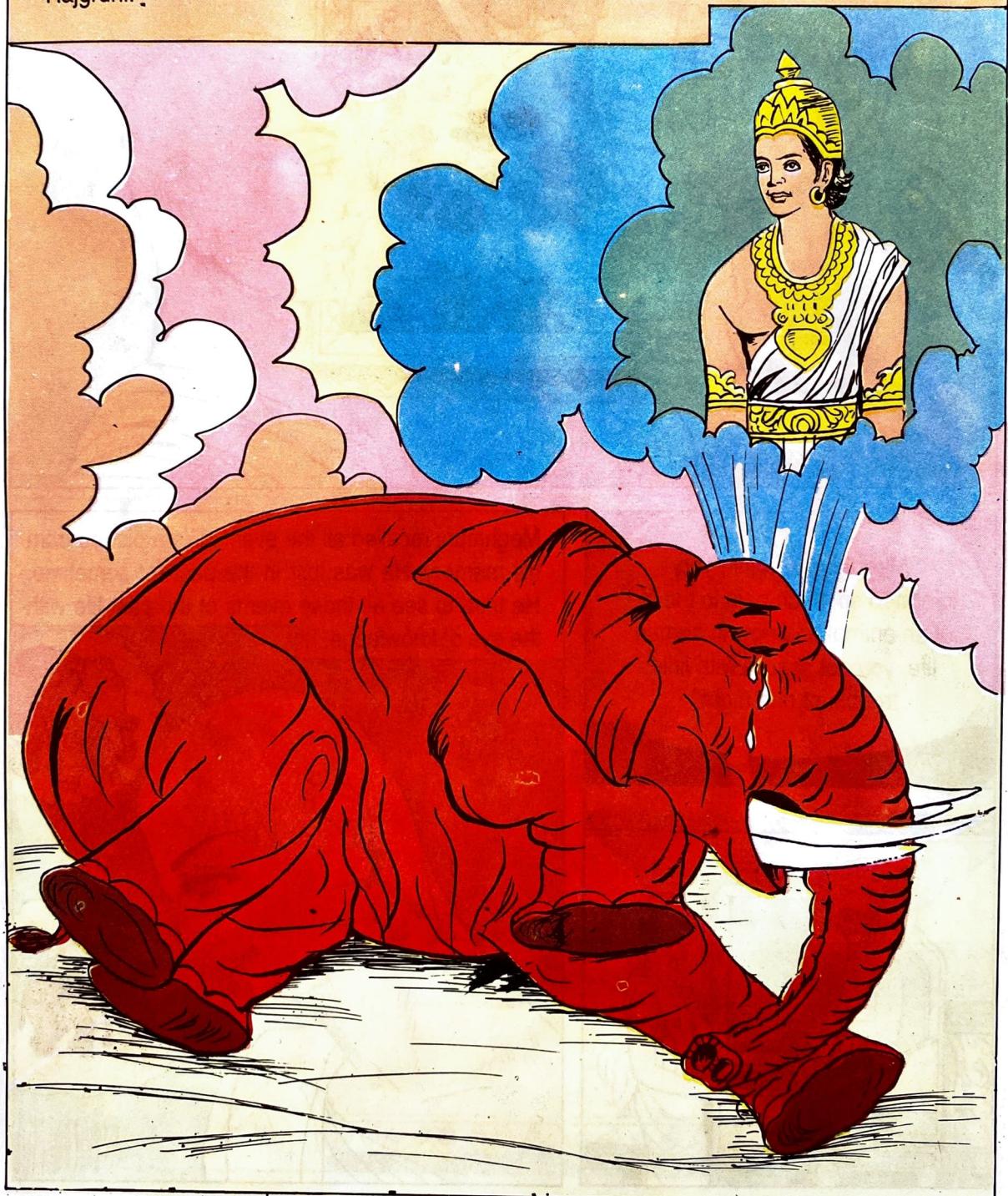


The elephant's heart was filled with compassion. He kept his leg lifted as it is.

The fire settled after about two and half days. All the wild animals started moving to their respective places. The rabbit also moved from there. Meruprabh thought-

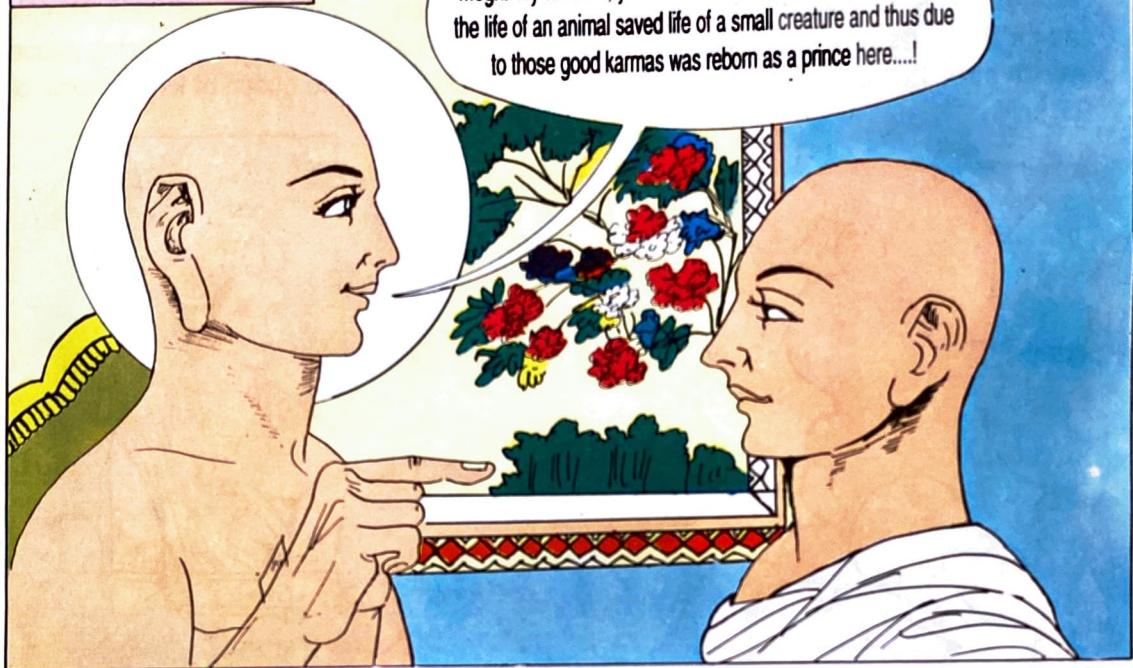


He lost his balance due to standing only on three legs for continuous two and half days and nights. He fell down. He could not get up due to the weakness from hunger, thirst and old age. His whole body was aching. He lied down in same position for three days with pain, hunger and thirst. But he was happy. Due to his compassionate nature, he was experiencing peace even in pain. That elephant took rebirth in the womb of Dharini, the queen of king Shrenik of Rajgruhi.

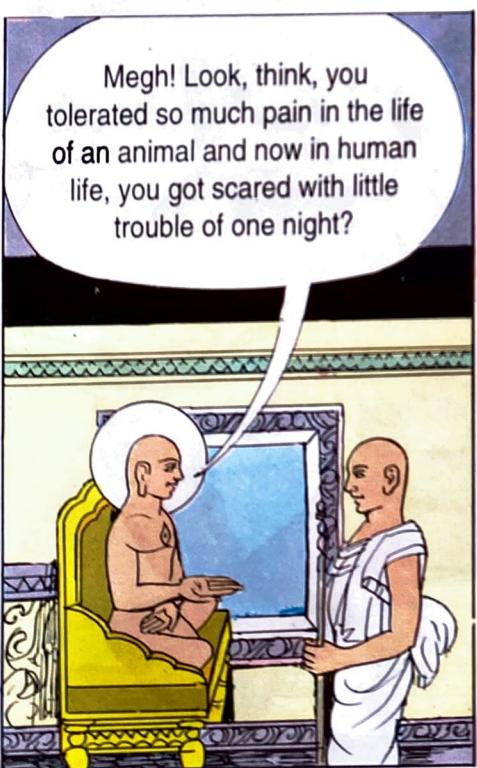


Bhagwan Mahavir addressed Meghmuni after telling this event-

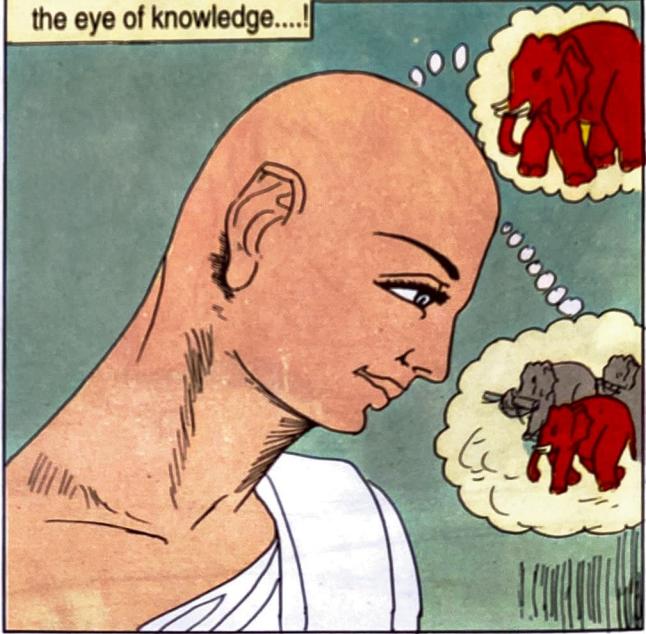
Megh! Try to recall, you were that Meruprabh elephant who in the life of an animal saved life of a small creature and thus due to those good karmas was reborn as a prince here....!



Megh! Look, think, you tolerated so much pain in the life of an animal and now in human life, you got scared with little trouble of one night?



Meghmuni recalled all the events like a picture from his memory. He was lost in the past for sometime. He tried to see all those events of the past life with the eye of knowledge....!



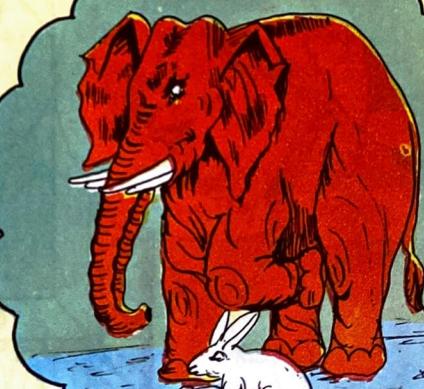
There was turmoil in his heart-

I got this human life after so much pain.
After the darkness of ignorance. I have
got the light of Knowledge. What will
happen if I'm lost now?

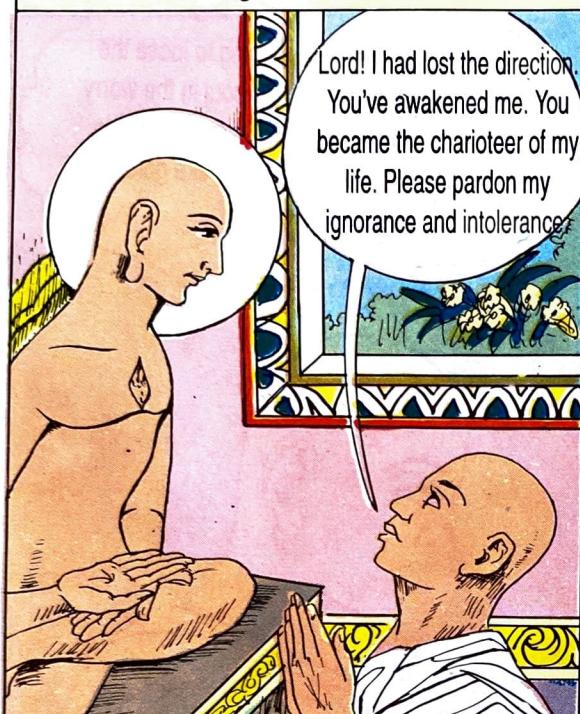
Megh's eyes were filled with tears while thinking on
the night's event.

How coward I am? I'm trying to loose the
unending happiness of the soul in the worry
of body comfort. Only if I burn my body in
penance, my soul will be made like gold, then
only I'm brave.

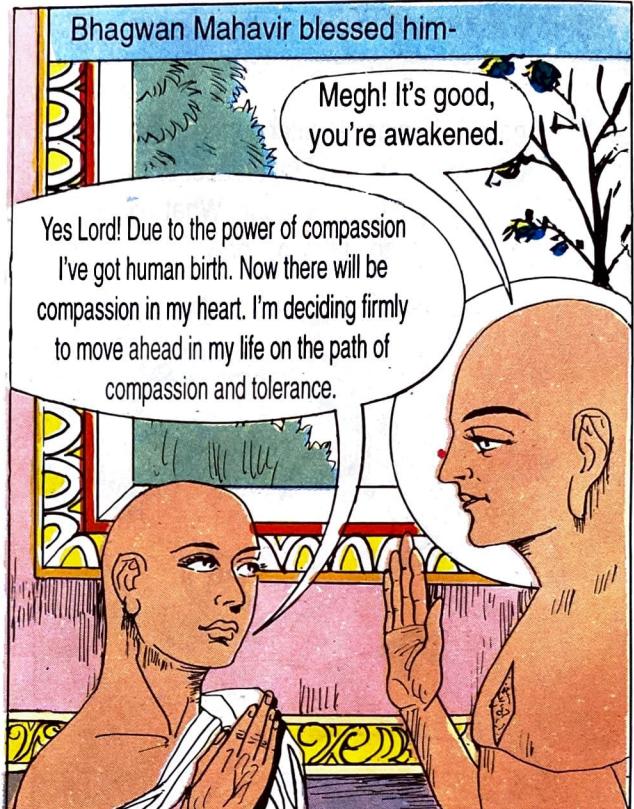
Only he can be compassionate towards others,
who has the power of tolerance. Tolerance
gives birth to compassion. I'll have to become
tolerant to won the struggles of the life.



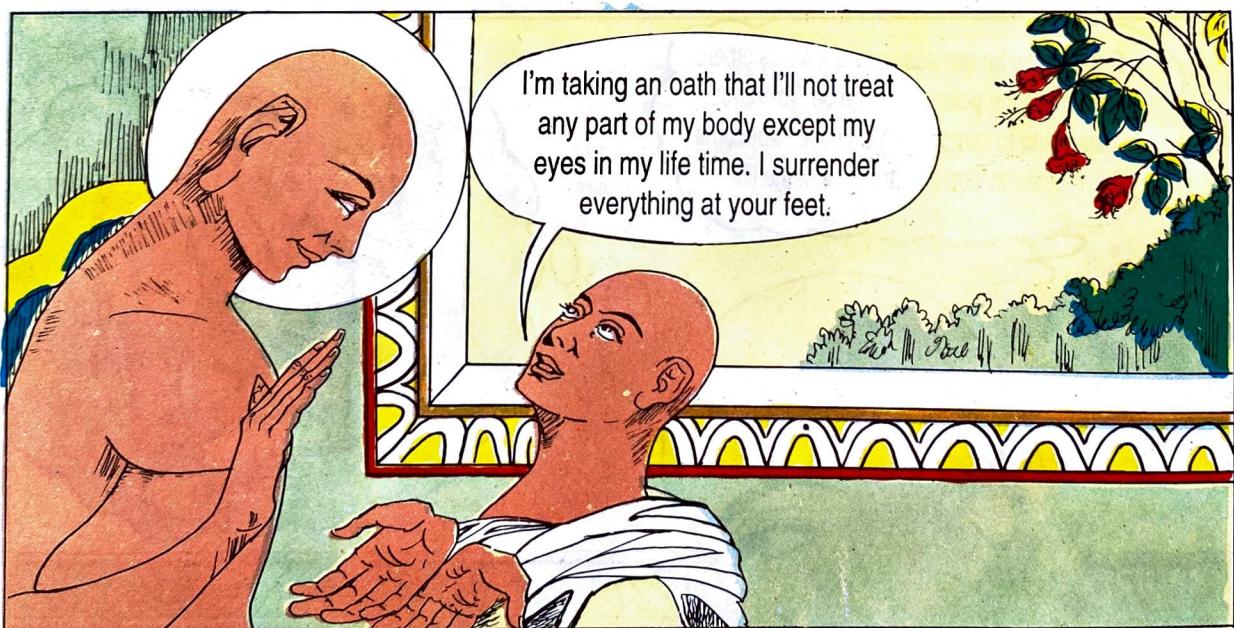
Meghmuni was awakened. He was thrilled. He came to Bhagwan's feet and said-



Lord! I had lost the direction.
You've awakened me. You
became the charioteer of my
life. Please pardon my
ignorance and intolerance.



Bhagwan Mahavir blessed him-
Yes Lord! Due to the power of compassion
I've got human birth. Now there will be
compassion in my heart. I'm deciding firmly
to move ahead in my life on the path of
compassion and tolerance.



I'm taking an oath that I'll not treat
any part of my body except my
eyes in my life time. I surrender
everything at your feet.

After this awareness, Meghmuni surrendered totally at Bhagwan Mahavir's feet. He spent his life in restraint, penance, meditation etc. for twelve years and then he went to Vipulachal mountain and practiced 'Anshan' (complete restraint of food and water) for one month. He accepted the death of an ascetic and became a deva (angel).

THE END

AHIMSA—NON-VIOLENCE

1. The meaning and concept of Ahimsa according to Jainism is very unique. Its uniqueness is to see life in the tiniest amoeba to the biggest elephant. This is the philosophy that teaches us to revere life in any form, from plants to people. Though Ahimsa is a small word it is the most powerful non-violent weapon in the world. Mahatma Gandhi drove the Britishers away not with guns or weapons, bullets or bayonets, but with the power and energy of Ahimsa—non-injury. Some people use the law of jungle, i.e., eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth. Contrary to this Ahimsa inspires us to be water against fire and to have love against hate.
2. In the present times when the world is bleeding with violence and hate the message of Ahimsa has a special significance. The greatest gift the Jain Tirthankars gave to the humanity and the world is the gift of Ahimsa. It is an ennobling virtue that brings each one on par with his or her fellow beings and all life forms.
3. There is one thing common in all life forms and that is an ardent desire to live and to be happy. No one wants to be killed, to be unhappy or to be in pain. Even an ant when is caught runs away swiftly for safety, because life is very dear to this tiny insect. That is why Mahavira said, "Injure not a living heart for it is the seat of God." He added, "You have no right to take life if you cannot give back life. Life is scared, life is precious, life is invaluable."
4. A great saint whose heart was filled with love and reverence for life said, "Break no ice crystal, tear no leaf from its tree, crush no flower, harm no insect, kill no animal for pleasure or for sport." Ahimsa means the harmony of our will to live with the other's will to live.

- So in short Ahimsa means reverence for all life.
- Ahimsa means to conquer others with love not with hate.
- Ahimsa means not to hurt any one by thoughts, words or deeds.
- Ahimsa means not to exploit others services.
- Ahimsa means to respect others point of view.
- Ahimsa means to see harmony in nature.
- Ahimsa means simple living.
- Ahimsa means beauty without violence.
- Ahimsa means live and help let live.
- Ahimsa means to liberate others from fear and suffering.

The incident you are about to read will tell you how men's negligence, unawareness, haste and cruelty led to the death of an innocent.



Compassionate Heart

THE KILLING OF AN ELEPHANT

—Aianna K. K.

Six people trampled to death, the same number of tenements razed to the ground, there was a rogue elephant on the rampage, the wooded vicinity bore a look of devastation. The Forest Department sent out snipers to terminate the animal and put an end to its insane prowl.

The snipers (two of them) shot at tandem and mowed down the mammoth herbivore. It was moonlight by the hillock, the pachyderm stung by the bullets sank on all fours (fore and hind). And as life ebbed away, there was a tender glitch of a tear in the elephant's eyes.

Yonder, ten paces behind, a forester perched atop a mound, pitched up his voice and yelled at the snipers..... "Hey ! you have shot the wrong elephant."

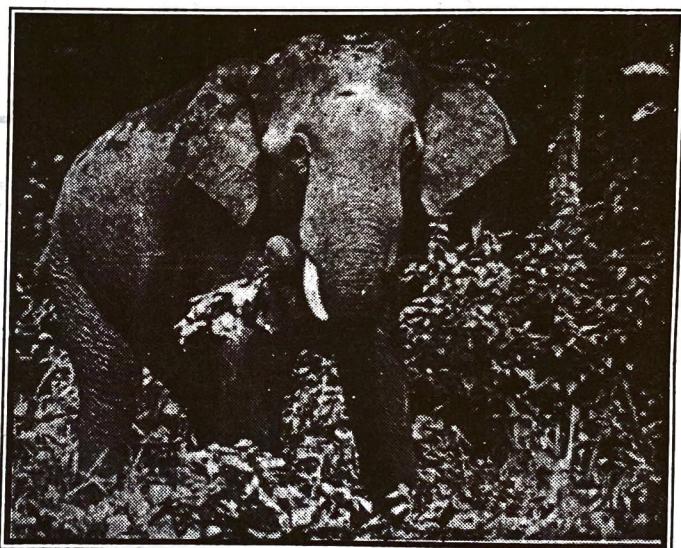
The still woods and the sylvan clusters mourned in silence for their fallen innocent friend, a song bird stopped its trill and the mellow brook lost its cadence.

Above story is courtesy of Animal Citizen.

Peace Dawns In The Soul Only When Violence Ceases To Be.

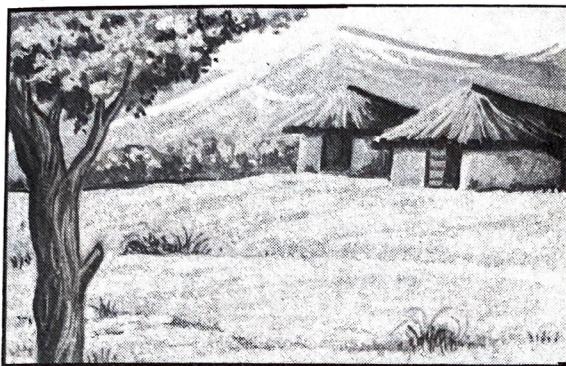
Jai Jinendra...!

-Pramoda Chitrabhanu

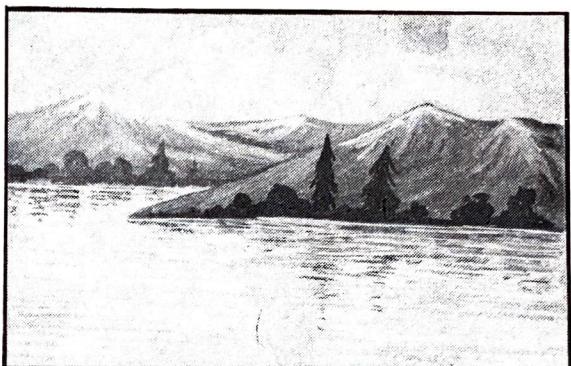


JIVA

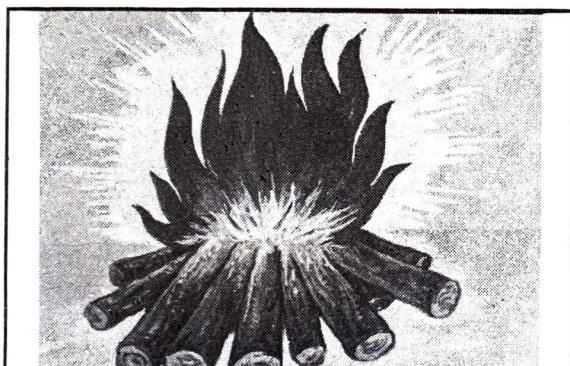
(ONE SENSE LIVING BEINGS)



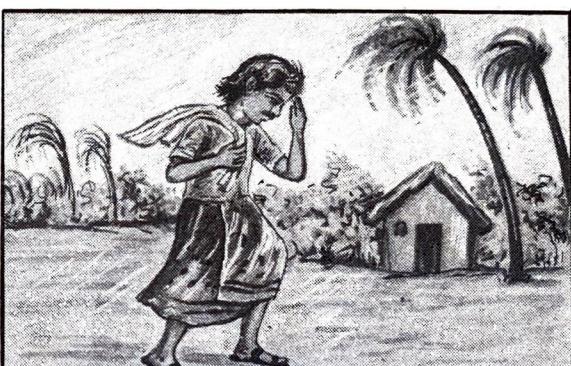
AN EARTH BEING



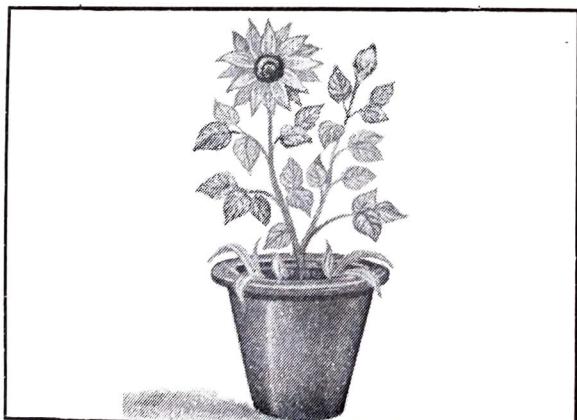
A WATER BEING



A FIRE BEING



AN AIR BEING



A PLANT BEING



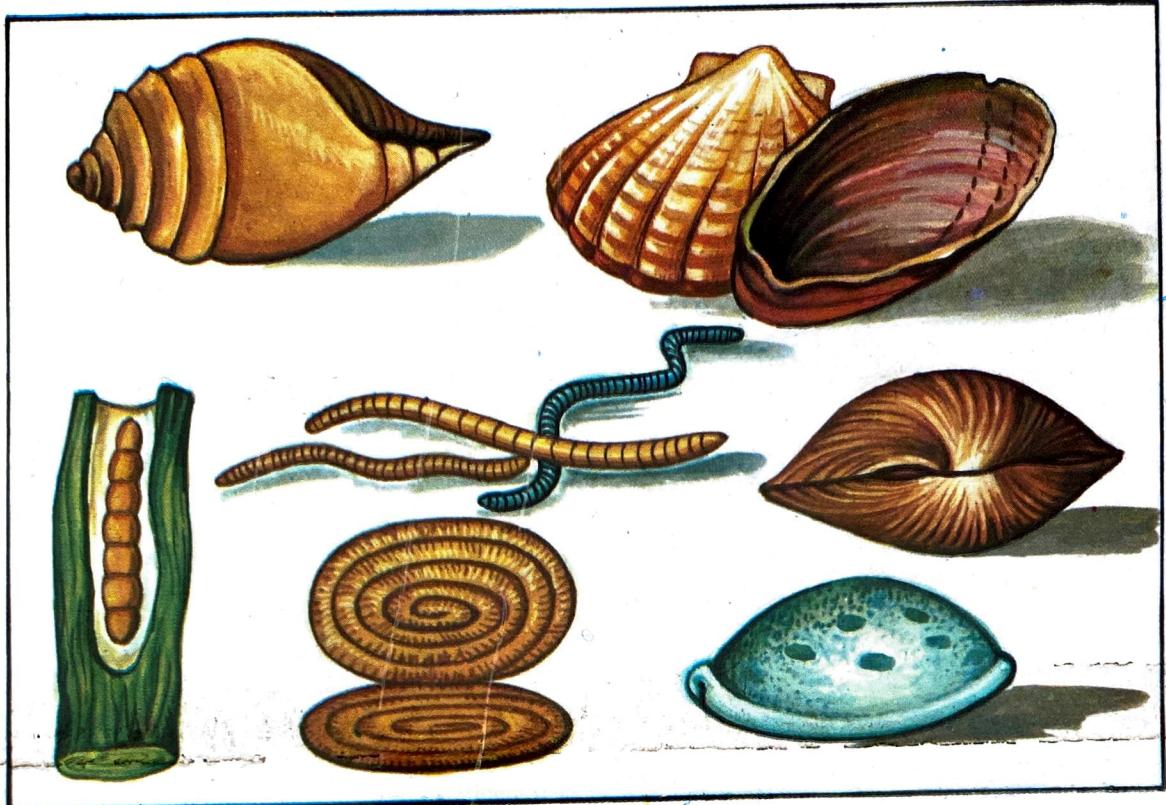
VEGETABLE BEINGS

We are living beings.

We have only one sense.

This sense is touch.

WE ARE



TWO-SENSED LIVING BEINGS

WE ARE LIVING BEINGS.

WE HAVE TWO SENSES.

THESE TWO SENSES ARE

TOUCH AND TASTE.

All those having one sense or two senses have Jeeva (Soul) like us. So treat them as you wish to be treated.